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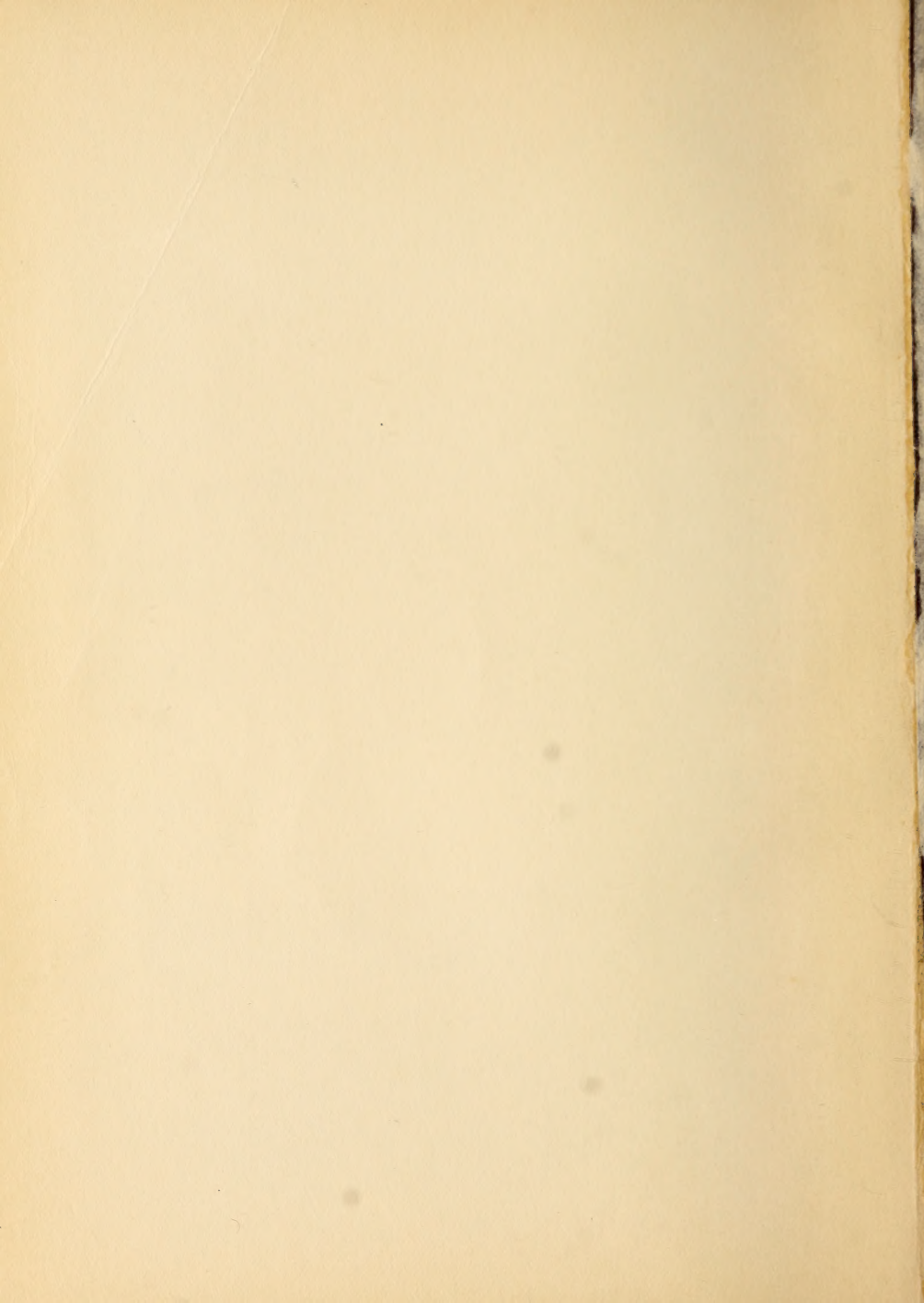
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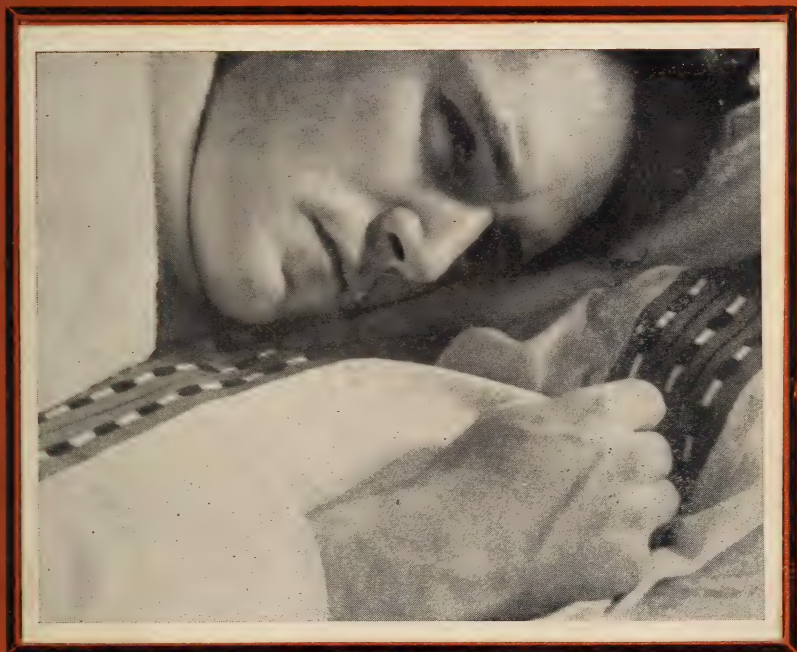
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as an Art*



Price 1 Shilling

Vol. VII No. 1

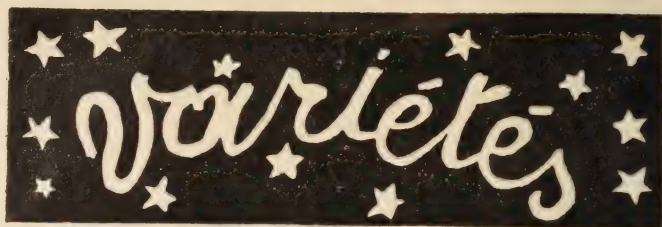
July 1930

London Office :

26 LITCHFIELD STREET (Charing Cross Road)
LONDON, W.C.2

(For all business matters in England)

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DE L'ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN
DIRECTEUR: P.-G. VAN HECKE

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3^{me} ANNÉE D'EXISTENCE

NOTRE NOUVELLE FORMULE :

6 NUMÉROS ORDINAIRES 6 VOLUMES SPÉCIAUX
PAR AN.

ABONNEMENT D'UN AN	:	175 francs pour la Belgique ;
"	:	175 francs français pour la France ;
"	:	17 1/2 florins pour la Hollande ;
"	:	40 belgas pour les autres pays.

"VARIÉTÉS" : Direction - Administration - Publicité :
BRUXELLES : 11, avenue du Congo - Téléphone 895 37.
Compte chèque postal - P.-G. van Hecke, N° 2152 . 19.

Editeur pour la France :

Librairie Gallimard, Paris

nrf

5, RUE SÉBASTIEN BOTTIN (7^e)

Dépôt pour la Hollande :

N. V. Van Ditmar, 182, Schiekade, Rotterdam

"Variétés" paraîtra le 1^{er} de chaque mois à partir du
1^{er} octobre prochain.

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Editor : K. MACPHERSON

Assistant Editor : BRYHER

Published by POOL

RIANT CHATEAU . . . TERRITET . . . SWITZERLAND

LONDON OFFICE : 26 LITCHFIELD ST., CHARING CROSS RD., W.C.2

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ENGLAND	14 shillings per year
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Vol. VI. No. 1

July 1930

AS IS

BY THE EDITOR.

One of the reasons why I do not like "film-theory," text-book acquired, text-book practised, text-book formulated, is that film theory cannot be learned that way. It is not film theory in fact, but remains as much the author's original, mystical possession thus outpoured as when originally rocked in the cradle of his deep and scheming brain.

The only thing is this : we love to talk.

By flushing the torrent of our meditation upon the innocent minds of those ready to listen we are apt to enjoy the beatific sense of endoctrining an ignorant world with some primary foundation of truth and uplift.

We are enriched—very seldom those who no matter how obligingly or assimilatively listen.

It is this way. In every elucidation, every "higher-education," something original—germinal—remains ungiven, hidden, nurtured and flowering only in the original soil of its creator's being. That something is a kind of sublime or arrogant conviction, some self-magnification which certainly

nobody else can, or would care to share. Even though it alone is valid and of value.

The theory as it remains, drained, dry, a residue, is ambiguous, amorphous, ready to be adapted to almost any use, interpretable into this or that at will. Some such thing I mean when I deplore the tendency or need in people to rush forward at all times with statements, edicts, pronunciamientos, finalities, concerning all manner of things—in this instance, cinema.

It is significant of human nature that partaking of a vastness, with which it cannot, or does not choose to cope, it seeks in all things first their *limits*. Having determined these by a few surprisingly casual stipulations, it feels at once better, wiser, more at grips with reality—begins, in short, ever so imperceptibly to swagger. “I,” says human-nature, “have recognised the limits of this subject. I see the boundary-post, (but not the railings which make it a park or a gentleman’s estate). And now I shall proceed to explore, develop and fitly govern.”—The omnipotence illusion in full blast!

It is a primitive biological reflection that any etiquette of choice, of arbitrary, casual, deliberate choice—any getting together to approve certain facets of existence and boycott others as too profound, abstruse, too this or that or the other—is in man desire for mastery; a means of making his weight felt if not by the forces of nature, at least by himself and his kind; a means of pruning his mind of that with which he cannot, as part of a “civilised social structure” immediately cope.

Thus theory at its source—the seeing of wider horizons ob-

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jectively—becomes to later minds the railings that make those horizons corrals or pens. Arts have all been crippled by them—literature, perhaps, most of all. “ But it doesn’t make sense ” remains the final argument of those who have learnt, who have never had any other inkling, that the “ art-form ” is at best a sorry dwarf, no matter what the art. “ Art-form ” is the bandage that deformed the Chinese ladies’ feet, there is no growth beyond its stranglehold. When you reach its limits you twist round—and round and round—spinning a cocoon of sameness like the roots of a flower left in a flower-pot, a pallid, protective, fibrous sheath. Theory is the protection of the undistinguished. “ Art-form ” is the *carte-d’identité* of the creative nonentity.

It is in the translation of *teaching* into *learning* that some willingness is lost, some enthusiasm—and some doubt creeps in. One of the scholars may yawn at the moment when he should be realising that all worthy teaching is a matter of *symbols*, and the mere spoken or written word, as such—well, is oil without the flame. Consider the degeneration of the christian formula . . . symbols neglected, perverted or overlooked. Christ’s words of human sympathy turned glibly round to justify those tight-lipped crimes of Church and State. But reflect above all how little—if indeed any—consideration from friend or foe has been given to the possibility that what was good in Galilee so many hundred years ago may not meet every need of modern man, this and every year of (can you doubt it ?) grace.

So much for theory let loose.

Theory is guess-work, put down as a statement and learned

as a fact. The artist worthy of the name, has something richer to sustain him. It is the small-fry always and everywhere who makes a hash of things. You know the type—so good a craftsman along thoroughly tried and formalised lines, so ready with his “facts,” his reference, a very inexorable fiend for “form,” a starchy, prehensile, cautious face, he *knows* in his meatless heart of hearts that others can do better. His one claim to distinction : he has *learnt*. He knows what's what, he does !

Actually he has learnt nothing—except to be a harmful pest. The craze for formulas is one of man's most flaccid traits. It is the cowardice imposed on him by the wider horizons grown narrow of an old, old pioneering.

Fortunately for us, our kino theories must wait. The rush of sound and colour, width and television makes all pronouncements vain. This commences the fourth of *Close Up's* years. And the one thing we have, any of us, learnt is Watch and Pray. In these three years the most enlightening of our few rewards has been the pod-like popping of the corks that were intended to keep film-art theories bottled in their place. New wine in the oldest of old bottles ! Theorems not theories, experiments not repetition.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

THE RELATIVITY OF TRANSITION

For us, there are no less than fifteen aspects of relativity in cinema, but before we discover them there must be some preliminary explanation of the principles of perceptual relativity.

The cinematic image-impression of an object, may be :

- (1) in motion (relatively to the camera eye—spatial transition),
- (2) in a state of tonal (monochrome) transition,
- (3) in a state of colour transition,
- (4) in an aspect of “ sound value ” transition (if it has any),
- (5) in an aspect of “ latent-psychic import ” transition, both from the visual and sonal points of view.

Since transition is always relative to *one* something else, we are presented with a mathematical problem to find the number of possible aspects of relativity (one to one) which may evolve from combinations two at a time from the above list. Thus we may speak of “ motion in relation to sound value transition ” (or for the sake of briefness, the aspect of relativity 1-4) in cinema, and easily convince ourselves that we are talking sense. The number of combinations of five things in pairs is fortunately no more than fifteen. Here is a scheme which includes all the possibles :

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Principle

1 to 1;
2 „ 2;
3 „ 3;
4 „ 4;
5 „ 5.

Subsidiary.

1 to 2; 2 to 3; 3 to 4; 4 to 5.
1 „ 3; 2 „ 4; 3 „ 5.
1 „ 4; 2 „ 5.
1 „ 5.

This scheme is prepared for the fullest development of commercial cinema, which presumably is tending to the full inclusion of colour and sound. Stereoscopic cinema comes under the aspect (1), spatial transition.

The first four (principle) aspects 1-1; 2-2; 3-3; 4-4; are by nature purely the manifest content of the film.

We shall review them as briefly as possible.

(1-1) Relativity of motion.

This may be obtained by a variety of methods, all mechano-geometrical in significance, involving flying cameras, moving objects, changing perspective, etc. In composite shots and mixes involving this aspect of relativity, the remarkable mental effects of “inertia” such as were described by myself in *Mechanisms of Cinema* may be induced. With no more material consciously used, by producers, than this, we have seen excellent essays in pure motion. The masters have often been content to explore this first and obviously primary aspect of cinema . . . “cinema at its source.”

Let us not overlook certain very serious defects which are absolute, and inherent in the motion picture from the day of its birth. Rapid rhythms of the order of 16 (or its multiples) per second are for obvious reasons, unsuitable for cinematograph.

(2-2) Tonal (monochrome) relativity,

is a principle aspect which has been employed almost to the

CLOSE UP

exclusion of other aspects in films of the genre *Light Rhythms*, whilst on the other hand *La Nuit Electrique* ignored tonal relativity absolutely. This is also usual in the cartoon (see *Cinderella* which possessed but three flat wash tones and no transition of tone values). We can record some remarkable successes completely free from mental monotony.

How relativity of motion may be intensified in its impressionism by the help of a correlative tonal transition, is properly the subject of the "subsidiary aspect" (1-2). The subsidiary aspects as a rule will be found to give rise to what I have called the latent content of the strip, whilst the "principle" ones (excepting 5 to 5̄) are almost always associated with the manifest content.

The whole subject of total light values of adjacent strips is of course more a matter of the relative light values. It is my impression, however, that the eye does not judge the total light value on the whole of the screen with very much refinement, so that total tone relativity is cruder, or has to be more pronounced, than in the ordinary sense indicated. I am sure it is of more importance when considered from the back of the cinema hall, where total light value is diminished from the outset due to the *square* of the distance.

(3-3) Colour relativity.

As there is little refinement yet in the commercial colour processes, I will not cite examples. Like every other department of physical optics, there is profound organization here, and the whole subject is extremely technical. Much has been heard of "primary colours," but how little of "complementary colours" in this regard? The painter works with primary

colours (at least always uppermost in his mind) which are of vast importance to him, but the colour cinema will have to keep complementary colours in strict regard. Cinema must be judged and artistically ruled by its own set of conditions. The retinal "persistence" of the image of a coloured object is manifest always by its "complementary" colour impression, which persists some time after the object has moved away. Thus a red hat which has remained stationary for even a very brief period, will cause a momentary *green* impression (persistence) in that place after it has moved. If the "red hat" has been singing for three minutes, and for three minutes we have been looking down the throat past the tonsils of its wearer, when that hat moves away, it is just possible that a prima-donna will go a sickly green. A green background will nullify this purely retinal but inartistic impression. This is complementary relativity in colour movement, the subject partly of (1-3). All the conditions of (2-2) which apply to monochromatic tones now apply equally to *each* colour considered separately. They apply *inversely* as between adjacent *complementary* colours in the process of tone transition. The more important tone areas only can be considered in production.

(4-4) Relativity of sound values of objects and persons.

I would like to hear the president of St. Dunstan's lecture on this, for the special aspect (4-4) is one which must be considered absolutely from a "blind" impression. I would listen to him in total darkness for preference. Radio has explored it with rather less success than was hoped for. With the perfection of "stereoscopic recording" (stereophony) in the talkies, the relativity of sound values will follow very closely

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the laws governing spatial relativity of motion. At the moment stereophony has not arrived and in consequence we rely on the sight impression very largely. Here, in the future, is cinema beyond the confines of the screen . . . in front of the screen . . . behind the observer ! Great Gabbo ! . . . what shall we come to ? This aspect, therefore (in lieu of further development) devolves upon (1-4) (Relativity of sound to visual motion) almost entirely.

Here we leave the purely manifest content of cinema for more important latent aspects. Without interrelation between the five principle classes of transition, without cross-relativity, compound cinema will remain hybrid and therefore sterile of all that we rightly expect from our beloved art.

(5-5) Relativity of Latent Import, (Visual and sonal.)

is really divided into three subsections : visual to visual ; (that is, *via* visual impressions) visual to sonal ; and sonal to sonal ; but as all three are functions of the unconscious and result in visual sublimation, the subject need not be divided. Eisenstein's explanation is that visual and sonal *overtones* are of the same *dimension*, and may therefore be added or compounded. My own theory identifies the *dimensions* of Eisenstein with the " planes of psychic activity " of Freud. The Freudian Dream Theory relies on an inherent human preference for visual symbolism, imagery, and picturization in its reaction to the *latent* aspects of impinging cinematic content. I say " cinematic content " and mean cinema in the absolute sense . . . cinema which existed before the invention of the motion picture camera and projector.

Eisenstein has developed a montage technique which so

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completely covers this Relativity of Latent Content (in adjacent strips) that I shall not attempt to reopen the subject here. On the other hand, J. Shige Sudzuki in *An Aspect Of Cinema Construction*—(*Close Up*, March, 1929), has treated the subject from a musical point of view. He writes of "thema," "tempo," and "accent," and actually suggests that these should be orchestrated as in music, according to "keys," "scales," "timbre" of instruments, etc. His instruments are the actors, and there is something fascinating about the idea of an "orchestra" and a "conductor."

(1-2) The Relativity of motion to tone transition.

Each phase is work for a different artist. The art of the photographer finds fullest scope in the relation of tonality to motion . . . the play of light and shade in transition. There is nowhere to begin and nowhere to end in what must always remain an artistically disorganized field of relationships, from which to weld mood and atmosphere together. There may be smooth and warm rhythms or smooth, oily, cold rhythms . . . brilliantly scintillating coldness or sparkling warmth . . . latent subtlety of distinction which at source is psychological. The film *H2O* is perhaps one of the classical essays.

The late German Continental lighting proved how important to the telling of a story is the attention to lighting . . . "low key" being responsible for many of the Ufa masterpieces. German studios use a mixture of daylight, electric, and incandescent . . . which incidentally links up exteriors, interiors, and close ups . . . and it seems after all, very logical. Much of the failure of *latency* felt in French films, might be traced to poor studio equipment or none at all. Surely the French are the most latent people on earth?

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With (1-2) I shall link (1-3), although technically colour presents far greater difficulties. Fortunately colour transition is very rare . . . avant-garde please note! Shall we someday have a *Mystère du Château du Dé* with a green "Nobody" who turns pink or yellow according to the throw kaliedoscopic dice?

(1-4) Motion relative to sound value.

Producers do not seem to have made up their minds about the change of sound volume for a sudden change of relative distance of the noisy object from the camera. I suspect this is one of the reasons for the plot to kill the close up . . . large screen, etc., etc. A tiny black spot with white gloves and white lips issues forth sounds in great volume . . . volume which is the same no matter how near (until the tears almost drip onto us!) we may approach. (Oh Al!)

The talkie camera has a bleary eye and an ear which may be just anywhere . . . anything up to 50 feet away. Why the ear should not be almost invariably close to the eye is a subtlety beyond me. Thank goodness that stereophonic recording will vindicate my rooted prejudice for wanting to feel normal about the head when in a cinema. Also, to see someone singing at 20 foot range and hear his voice from behind, will once and for all eliminate the odious "double." The ventriloquial double will command an enormous salary! On the other hand, doubles could be suspended over stars after the fashion of microphones! Very good suggestion.

The general principles of sound to sight relations in regard to motion appear to be straightforward, and sound is supposed to add to the suggestiveness of a calamitous approach, or a heartrending leavetaking!

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(1-5) (to which may be coupled (4-5). The relativity of motion and latent import. (Visually or sonally realised.) The cessation of motion is dramatic . . . almost any situation which has been developing along carefully provoked psychic lines, may be brought to a penultimate stage by the dramatic use of a cessation of motion . . . for a brief moment. Then comes the climax. On the other hand, motion can be introduced to relieve the tension . . . "do something!" is on our lips! (once again a good talkie and Western Electric recording have got you in their spell . . .!!) If sound effects produce either the cessation or starting off of motion, then the talkie has justified itself somewhat! Even a railway whistle . . . causes the train to move off . . . then sound is justified. Tone transition (monochrome) in relation to latency (2-5) is a delicate refinement, incapable of a general analysis, whilst colour to latency (3-5) seems most unlikely to occur . . . blushing is not done! I think I am correct in saying that there has been one colour-music film . . . if not there is sure to be. (3-4) must therefore wait. The remaining aspects (2-3) and (2-4) are automatically produced, and therefore devolve upon other relations already discussed.

Now that I have cross related all the pairs of "aspects of transition" I feel that I have covered all the truly "cinematic" aspects of cinema as it may be in the future. For cinema is composed of transitions . . . and in the study of their relative aspects, lies much, if not all, that we can hope to get out of it. My analysis is by no means exhaustive.

L. SAALSCHUTZ.



Westfront, 1918, a Nero-Film directed by G. W. Pabst. This harrowing epic of the war has created history in Germany, and it is to be hoped that audiences in England and America, who have, and will have, the opportunity to see the Universal *All Quiet*, will not have to miss this acclaimed masterpiece. A wrecked church, used as a temporary hospital, is significantly decorated with panels representing stations of the cross. At left, the shattered effigy of Christ lies like a dead soldier, spread across debris and flung-down rifles.



Jacky Monnier in *Westfront*, 1918.



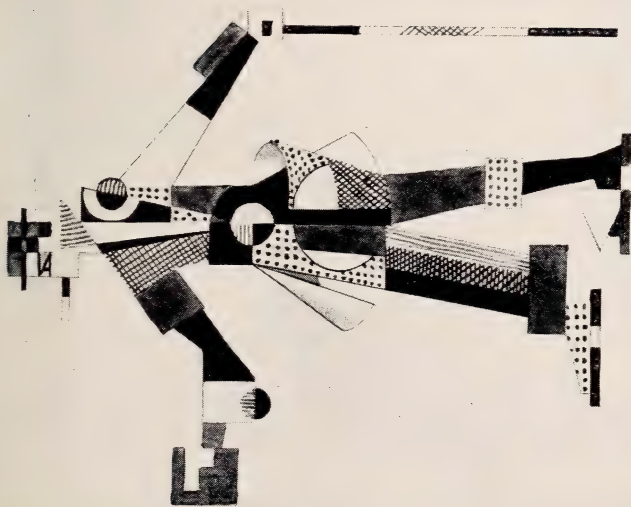
Fritz Kampers in *Westfront*, 1918.



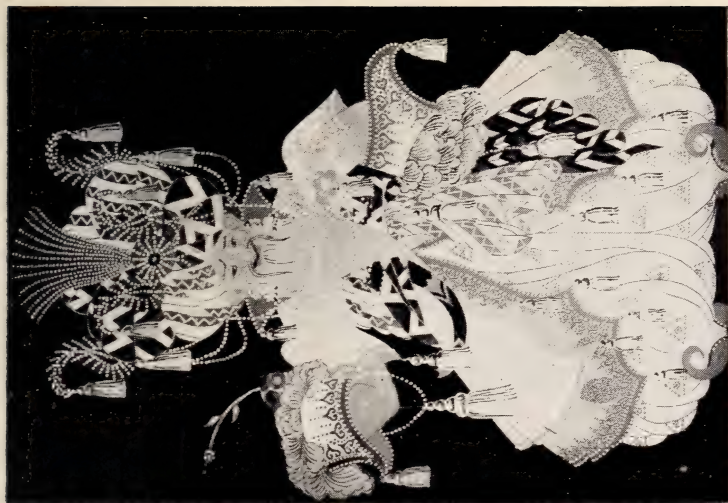
Morphia is injected to relieve the agony of a shot-away stomach. Fritz Kampers in *Westfront*, 1918. One of those kindly acts which makes war "such fun" for the dear tommies.



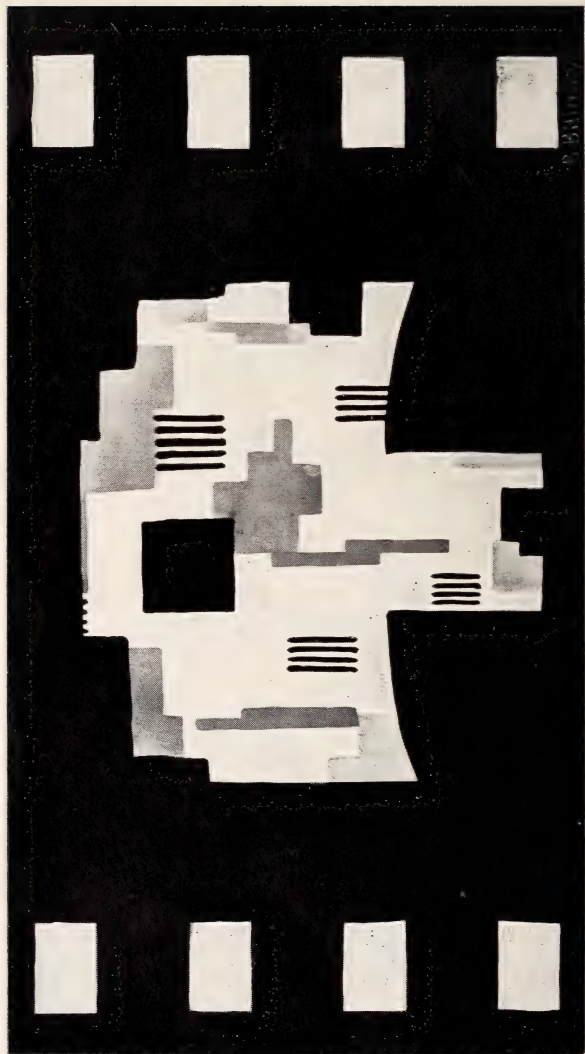
Exclusive reproductions of designs by Boris Bilinsky, whose recent exhibition of scenes and costumes for twelve films, held at the Galerie de France, Paris, has created for him an even wider following of admirers. The above is the Avenue de l'Opera, Paris, in 1975. A decor for the film 1975, conceived by Ivan Mosjoukine in 1924, but never turned. Ironically, the one building that remains unchanged is the appalling Opera itself !



"A monsieur in the vision fantasque," 1975.
Design by Boris Bilinsky.



The sultan Chariar—a gorgeous design by Bilinsky for the film *Sheherazade* (*Secrets of the Orient*), produced by A. Wolkoff for Ufa in 1928. The picture in its original colours is in itself a work of art.



One of Mr. Blinsky's *projets cinématographiques*—an image of a film projected as theatrical decor on the back-drop for the *Miracle de Saint Georges*, by Remisoff.



A Russian soldier in Caucasian costume—a design by Boris Bolinsky for the 1929 Ufa film, *The White Devil*, a Bloch-Rabinovitch production directed by Alexander Wolkoff. The 1850 epoch is well represented in this and in the accompanying sketch for the general.



A Russian General. A Boris Bolinsky design for *The White Devil*, in which Ivan Mosjoukine was starred—though, needless to say, not in the trappings of the old gentleman so graphically depicted above.



From *Market in Berlin*, a film of "short-metragé" recently shown in Berlin and by the London Film Society. The film was made by Wilfried Basse for Basse-Film, G.m.b.H. at the weekly market in the well-known Wittenbergplatz. The old lady is collecting refuse when the market is over.



Later. The cleaning up. Hoses have swept the earth of its litter. This "shot" drew forth applause from the Berlin audience.

FLESH: THE ALL-EVERYTHING SCENARIO

Flesh. Flesh. More flesh. Still more flesh. Flesh yielding, flesh dominant, flesh ubiquitous, flesh triumphant. Flesh exotic, flesh erotic. FLESH.

Atta boy.

That's quite enough of that. (Remark by Girl, to Soldier.) Now, to quit the Gertrude Stein stuff and get on with the job. (Same Girl, later Date, different Soldier) there are all sorts of films. Only most of them don't, which may be subtle if you trouble to think it out.

With the pre-breakfast clearness of the philosopher, and it is so easy to be a sage before onions, let us look into the future, where we find a face which only a mother could love, and that with difficulty.

The lusciousness of contemporary cinema is as nothing compared with the years ahead, when the all-smelling, all-feeling masterpieces will have their way. Gone will be the casual jolt (entirely Wardour Street visionary) at the two-dimensional haunches, gone the ecstatic abandon felt by the servant girl when the villain proceeds to put over his stuff.

Fade out.

Cinematic literature. The use of the inanimate image.

I visualize, smell, and feel the all-talking, all-singing, all-dancing, all-colour, all-smelling, all-feeling masterpiece of the future. The mechanics are beyond me. Mine are the oscillations of the crystal set mentality.

The first cinema art form—hieroglyphics.

How the all-smelling, all-feeling attachments can be mechanically perfected leaves me cold. Indent ideas about rose sprayers and programme girls.

If the circumference of a circle is 13 times the distance across any given triangle when an anticyclone is centred north of Zanzibar, how many rings around Rosie will be required to empty the first bath from Tap C while Tap D is filling it during the winter hibernation of the common and domestic swallow, *Hirundo Hirundinidae*, otherwise known as the Gurgle in Ordinary?

Let us consider the all-everything scenario, if it bears consideration which is highly doubtful. Being all-everything, it must have universal entertainment, which means to say that in describing the finished product the honest critic will have to pause while recollecting whether or not there is an "e" in lousy.

Revue is indicated; the review of revues.

The all-everything scenario. Consider the lilies; they talk not, neither do they squawk, but yet I tell you that *Gold Diggers of Broadway* in all its colour sequences was never arrayed as one of these. Which is perhaps just as well.

In mapping out the screen's first Gigantic All-Everything, let us remark, for the benefit of Carl Laemmle and the inspiration of Dupont, that revue must have unity. Having re-

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membered Hollywood's weaknesses, and bearing in mind the invaluable tuition in audience appeal we endured last month, let us decide to unify our all-everything what-not around something universally appealing, a seaside holiday, where it might be said that a Man's an ass for a' that.

This is the perfect box-office subject; it is surprising it has not been used before. It has the appealing idealism of rose-coloured adolescent daydreams, the inspiring smugness of youth at play, the unfailing popular suggestion of romance, etc., etc.

Theme song, something about flies round a jam pot.

Having made up our minds to give the impressarios something to think about, we might as well open our revue with a Bandstand Ensemble. We have to open it with something.

The predominant note in the opening will be lively, there will be a touch of what British directors, addressing crowd artistes, describe as "broad animation," which means the wild waving of life and limb. The musical background will be jazzy, the outstanding colour a pink-purple. The Smell Major will be cheap *eau de Cologne*, and the Feeling Track, by which our resourceful engineers will make their determined attack on the citadel of the back rows, will suggest that limpness which accompanies a Turkish bath.

The movement, establishing the opening tide in the rhythmic flow of the picture (you know Hollywood's getting arty, don't you?) will be a continuous perambulation of the female of the species, anti-clockwise across the screen, with periodic pauses, something like waves on a flat shore, a subsidiary movement which will be established later when the audience want a little Stark Beauty.

Speaking of Stark Beauty, of course, suggests the chorus dances for the opening number, to the tune of a theme song—deftly switching the audience-mind to the wonders of the stereoscopic screen, *I'm all in the depths for you*.

The steady crescendo of the opening, culminating in a blaze of purple, a strong overdose of cheap perfume, and full tilt on the Feeling Track with the Turkish bath stuff, will culminate, after some spectacular colour-trick photography in which the bandstand will spin round like a coin in the air and the Turkish bath stuff will positively sizzle, while the sound track emits an agony-cry usually associated with a giggle of typists, in the next movement, a surf bathing scene.

Here the smelling apparatus will be vaguely reminiscent of rank seaweed. Already the endless possibilities of a lap dissolve from a Turkish bath to a sewer pipe must be presenting themselves to the best all-everything film directors.

The Feeling Track will put over a suggestion of warm sea water, preferably with a tinge of wetness. The feeling of water will no doubt be a novelty booking for many a popular audience. The colour, obviously, will be a golden tint suggestive of sand.

In order to allow for general entertainment, this sequence can be used in the cutting room to connect the picture, and the theme should be made the scaffold for exercises on all known forms of public apathy. The first time it appears the comedian, very fat, with horizontally striped costume, can do his stuff in the water, next Mother Love can have its innings. (The poor little thing, will it drown? No, the handsome young man has saved it. What a pity.) Then again, use can be found for swimming as an excuse for Sex Appeal. Bathing

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beauty competitions. Leap frog. Graham Cutts camera angles.

Towards the end of the film, when Sterner Realities of Life (where are all those capitals?) are having their innings, Devotion can be introduced. The two pals. Who is to get in first and see if it's cold?

Or Fatherlove. (If the little b—— doesn't learn to swim now when the Hades will he?)

Or Sisterlove. (She was only a baker's daughter, but oh, how she needed a beau.)

Or Sacrifice. (One of us must drown, darling; women and children first.)

Or Romance. (I leave it to you.)

The smell-feel synchronization here is a little difficult. Only the most astute psychologists will be able to be film directors in a few years' time, which means that the same old gang will make the same old stuff, as before.

Rosemary for remembrance, and the smell of new-mown hay and the feel of a fox terrier about to bite a juicy portion of calf for Romance. Feeling-montage. The use of the transposed metaphor.

Continuing with the development of the masterpiece, broad comedy will have its day in the form of a landlady scene in an apartment house. No rehearsals will be necessary and an odd aspidistra will be the chief prop.

The smell here will be musty, and the Feeling Track will register something dirty in the lower octaves. After fading out on a perfect riot of low comedy it would be as well to flash in (with the stock bathing stuff) on a pretty-pretty note, just

to keep the balance even and to stop the audience from getting too wide-awake.

Next, as a sop to those of us who are sufficiently silly to take anything seriously, something short and abstract is called for. One hundred feet of footage might safely be allotted to it, as for so brief a space the great heart of the British public would merely think it was the projector going mad.

Think of the possibilities. The unification of movement, colour, depth, smell, and feeling.

After the hysterics this exhibition of debased interest in matters cinematic would generally occasion have subsided, the masterpiece could slip into its great highlight, the romantic theme song, shot against a background of sea and sadness. Something plaintive, like a moon on a rotting garden.

The purple colour movement in the film's montage would come right out on top here, and the Feeling Track could put over something akin to the first hint of chickenpox breaking out, while the good old rose sprayers could emit a quiet suggestion of babies and face powder.

High art could now enjoy its little hour or two, with some interludes by a military band on the pier. Any pier and any band would do. They are all the same. The colour scheme, naturally, would be mainly red, the smell vaguely sergeant-major, and the feeling counterpoint would be cut off.

There is no feeling in a military band. . . More possibilities for the all-everything directors; the withdrawal of one particular sense for purposes of cinematic satire.

By now it can safely be assumed that all members of the audience will have had some return for their sixpences, and as a warning that things are on their last legs and that ideas

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are running out (grateful sighs from unwary readers) the second big romantic theme song can be plugged for awhile.

The setting, smell and feeling synchronization as before. Only more so.

Now, for a brief touch of sophistication, just to appeal to the Golders Green district. A rose by any other name. . .

A sequence, wedged in between Motherlove on the surf and a few more bathing belles, among the Smart Set. Do not hurt them, gentle policeman, that are really only tight.

A smart hotel sequence. Registers. The curious fact that out of every hundred inhabitants of the smart set, ninety-five are called Smith over the week-end. Perhaps a mannequin parade. Certainly a dressing room, and some dialogue, with the triangular motive predominant. No one is angry, or jealous. But just bored. It is so tedious, being interested in anything.

The Feeling apparatus will remind one somewhat of the last few sermons one heard. That dream-state condition, where the mind flits idly from random mutterings to half-formed images. A feeling of supreme mental blankness. This could be suggested through the touch-sense by registering the effect of a large block of ice completely enveloping the whole body.

The smell, of course, will be ultra-modern. And frightfully sophisticated. A Woolworth bargain basement, or something of the sort.

Back once more to the bathers. It is evening. It is more than evening. The moon is shining. (You know those studio moons, which know no wane. Reclining gracefully against a swaying backcloth.)

A repetition of the first theme song. It must be plugged. It must be plugged. Smell and feeling as before, only more powerful.

A new profession. Air changing in a super cinema.

A love motif. (Yes, another.) Track shots, past innumerable couples, babbling like the brook. The Feeling emission will be that of a small boy in the presence of his headmaster.

Our revue is nearly completed. Wanted; a good finale. It must necessarily go back to the first movement, the Bandstand Ensemble. One must be symmetrical in these days when P. G. Wodehouse is writing for the screen.

And so, back to the joyless cuties; the mixture as before. The purple colour scheme gets warmer, the smelling apparatus belches a suggestion of hot oil (so realistic, the contemporary cinema) the Feel-movement is doing pins and needles.

There is a blaze of Technicoloured light, the people and the bandstand revolve, like a coin being tossed, the hot oil spills over and the front row of the stalls vows to spend an extra threepence next time. The movement increases its speed, the component parts lose their identity in a whirl of colour, stabbing out, trick title-like, the word

SIN

to the tune of all the theme songs played together (how modern, this film score business).

The pace continues. The whirlpool colour mass on the screen is mentally coupled with the sudden merging of all the smell-movements in the film, curiously resembling the aroma of fried bacon in places like old Arizona. The smell increases the screen, until now a huge affair, diminishes suddenly, and

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the colours clash (purple predominant) into the word

SAND

—and such a profound word, too.

Back to the big screen once more. Solid letters, the gift of the third dimensional, hurl themselves out at the audience, jogging the dozers in the back rows, blazing and stabbing in the dark theatre like lightening seen through a forest. The Feeling counterpoints from the picture merge together, giving the patrons a feeling of overwhelming stupidity in the presence of the great Spirit of the Movies, the whole issue working up into a frenzy of sound as the screen stabs out the word

SUNSHINE.

The end. The fight for the exits. The chief Feeling, after all, was merely a pain in the neck. By the way, it's a Hugh Castle Production. Don't forget.

HUGH CASTLE.

THE REVIVAL OF NATURALISM

THE birth and progress of the Naturalistic novel during the nineteenth century should be familiar to all. So also should the fight pursued with inexhaustible energy by the exponents of Naturalism against the Academic and Romantic traditions. That the battleground of this struggle, with its far-reaching

effects, should have been France is not unnatural. New ideas were at the same time revolutionizing painting and politics. Impressionism and Socialism. And France has always been a country eminently suited as an environment for intellectual campaigns.

In brief, the Naturalistic novel proceeded from Balzac, (hidebound in a defence of monarchy and authority yet "observing from life") to Gustave Flaubert, who laid the foundation of the new movement in the immortal and at the time immoral *Madame Bovary*. But Flaubert turned his back on the realistic method, disdainful of his own accomplishment. It was for Zola and his disciples to lift the stone of Naturalism and to fling it in the face of the world. And the missile has left its dent on the face of the cinema.

Zola. Zola.* I have long wanted to probe the connection that lies between this great figure and the cinema. To discover why so many of his novels have been found peculiarly suitable for filmic purposes. Above all, to investigate the bond, strong and I believe of the greatest significance, that exists between the champion of Naturalism and the so-called naturalistic directors of the Soviet left-wing.

Apart from a long survey of his novels, each of which is of great length demanding endless perseverance from a reader accustomed to-day to books of comparative brevity, investigation is now made easily possible by the publication of Matthew Josephson's *Zola and His Time* (Victor Gollancz, London). Therein is made clear much that is of extreme value

* I believe implicitly in a firm mysterious co-relation that lies between name and man.

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to the *cinéaste* by a revelation and close analysis of Zola's methods of working. There will be found in the admirable pages of Mr. Josephson's book matter that both strengthens and explains the bond between the Naturalism of Zola and that of various contemporary film directors. Between the scientific methods of technique that are common to each.

* * *

The foundation of Naturalism was Truth. The spring of Zola's attitude was an exact, truthful, unshrinking observation of nature and man. Inasmuch that without analysis, without method, without deliberate truth there could be no politics any more than literature possible at that time. In fact, no art, no social culture, no purity of existence could exist without scientific method. According to Taine, perhaps the most distinguished thinker in France at the period, vice and virtue were (chemical) products like sugar and vitriol. Here, then, we may remember the constructivism of Pudovkin; the composition of filmic reality out of photographically-recorded natural material.

Throughout all his long series of Naturalistic novels, Zola governed his conception by the outlook of Hippolyte Taine. Convinced that man could not be separated from his *milieu*; that he leaves his imprint upon his exterior life, his house, his furniture, his affairs, his gestures; and that to express everything one must express this multitude of effects and assemble this multitude of causes, Zola ultimately held that a state of environment determines and complete the human being. Thus, when Gervaise, the laundress in *L'Assommoir*, is happy, the street is gay and bright with sun; when she is

despairing, the gutter-stream is black and filthy ; when she is meditative, the water reflects the blue, the deep azure of the summer sky. This *emphasis* of environment in order to *express mood* and its extreme significance in filmic representation is too obvious to need comment. Further, note that the underlying motive of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* was that of a given personality, conceived as a unit in a mass, pitted against its environment, the *milieu* into which it is born. Here, we may recollect the earlier films of Griffith, who placed his characters in their natural sympathetic environment ; and Seaström, whose characters are pitted against their environment.

But Zola diverged from Taine's thesis in his selection of characters. For whereas the latter desired general types to be used in strict accord with the theory of environment, Zola showed a preference for the exceptional, the pathological specimen, believing it to be more worthy of the artist. This is a belief that still exists. Compare, for example, the often erotic and neurotic characters of Pabst, revealed by a complex psycho-analytical method of filmic representation, with the raw material of Eisenstein's selection. But, on the other hand, Zola avoided in his arrangement of action the popular " chain of coincidences " and substituted a " natural succession of events," which for filmic purposes should arrive from the conflicting or sympathetic moods of the characters. Zola had always a longing for order, for logical development, for a chain of determined causes and effects.

His rendering of man was purely physiological. It was never his aim to comment or moralize psychologically. He

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desired only to investigate, to expose, to lay everything that he saw in life before the reading public. He stated facts without bias or ulterior meaning. He was a propagandist only for his creed of Naturalism. He studied the behaviour of his characters rather than their mental conflict. He was one of the first novelists to present sex in its true dominating role; but he was concerned alone with its physical aspect. And here again is matter of interest to the *cinéaste*. The film director is equally concerned with behaviour, in order to express the inward thoughts and emotions of his characters by their visually expressive external actions. By psycho-analytical observation, the film director employs every gesture to reveal and build up the personality of his characters. But this is common cinematic knowledge, especially to the Pabstian.

Zola penetrated every strata of humanity. His novels are crowded with natural and unnatural types, each considered physiologically and never psychologically, the product of their environment. Murderers, drunkards, saints, lechers, whores, bourgeois, soldiers, statesmen, shopkeepers, workers. Good, bad, stupid, imbecile, sensible, malicious, angelic. Above all he knew the lower-classes, the masses, the proletariat. Gross, quarrelling, sweaty, sordid, bare-fisted, bestial, usually unintelligent and oppressed. He had in his youth known poverty, hunger, squalor, depression, as indeed it is necessary for every true artist. We read of his attitude towards such living in *Le Ventre de Paris*, where Lantier speaks of life as an eternal warfare between the Fat and the Thin. Always are the Fat the contented shopkeepers, the bourgeois, the pillars of society; the Thin are the

oppressed, glowering with hunger, hatred or revolt, scheming for the downfall of their betters. One remembers *New Babylon*. And Zola presented all with such "unshrinking observation," "truth" and "Naturalism" to call forth Ferdinand Brunetière's attack . . . "in his brutal style, his repulsive and ignoble pre-occupations, he has gone further than all other realists. Is Humanity composed only of rascals, madmen and clowns?" To-day, refer to your daily newspaper and read almost any London film critic on Soviet films in general and the work of Pabst in particular. In point, the review of any film that deals with the essential facts of existence.

Zola was aware (as we are aware to-day) that the only way to attack evil was with a hot iron . . . with Truth! The whole of his career he was met with bitter antagonism. Every novel was received with columns of hostile criticism. Abuse of every conceivable kind was heaped upon him. Until, after the famous Dreyfus affair, in which he carried the pursuit of truth outside the covers of his novels into the ramifications of national affairs, he fled into exile. His literature was variously condemned as pornographic, obscene, bestial, brutal, evil, to which came his sole, unanswerable reply: "For me there are no obscene works; there are only poorly conceived and poorly executed ones. Our analyses can no longer be obscene from the moment that they become scientific and contribute a document. . ."

A DOCUMENT? Is that not the nature of a true film?

* * *

To the student perhaps the most interesting characteristic of Zola was his astonishing feeling for mass-movement. For

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the conception of a universal scheme of actions and reactions. The movements and existence of his smaller figures are plaited into the mass-movement of the whole. Take *Germinal*, where the theme was "individual suffering posed against or accompanied by the eternal injustice of the classes." Take all the minor characters, entangled and swept up in the "great cataclysm that symbolises their lives." The Strike. To quote Mr. Josephson: ". . . *Germinal* is the poem of a strike. The whole central portion of the book, deals with the assembling of the outraged miners in a forest at night, and their long procession consequently in a mob through one mining town after another, upon a career of vengeance and destruction. . . All the moments in the life of this mob are stark and clear, from that in which the dying sunset throws "great lakes of blood" upon the flat plains behind them and upon their distorted faces, to that dreadful pause and silence which precedes the firing by the military guards upon the bare-fisted men and women." (Here is the Russian film.) In a letter to Henry Céard, Zola comments on *Germinal*: ". . . the truth is that this novel is a great fresco. Each chapter, each compartment of the composition is so closely packed that everything seems foreshortened. . . In this design I had thought that the large movements expressed a thought sufficiently, in imposing themselves upon the mass of the crowd. My subject was the action and reciprocal reaction of the individual and the crowd, one upon the other. . ."

Writing in 1928 on the descriptive power of Zola, I said: "He shows the big things with the little things taking place at one and the same time, in a filmic manner. In *La Débâcle*, that epic war novel, when I had read to the end of the part

dealing with the battle of Sedan, I said, it is impossible, it is inconceivable to imagine anything written with more terrific feeling, more intensity, more strength of speech than this miserable disaster. But it is done cunningly by use of light and shade, by contrast of masses, by quiet and storm, until the climax comes with the burning of Paris and you are left with it ringing in your ears. I can remember no book that has aroused stronger emotions in me. It is brought about by a perfection of detail, by a subtle collection of small insignificant scenes, occupying possibly only the fraction of a second, but nevertheless of vital importance. The sticky tiles in the room of death in Weiss's house at Bazeilles; the broken gas-pipes that jetted fire in the streets of Paris; the smashed spectacles on Weiss's nose as the little man is shot against the wall of his house. Again, the crossing of the Meuse by night, the endless file of Cuirassiers emerging from the darkness of one bank and disappearing into that of the other; the neighing horses with their manes raised and their legs stiffened with fright; the men erect in their stirrups, uniformly draped in their long white cloaks, their helmets blazing with fiery reflections, looking like phantom horsemen with flaming hair. Later, when Silvine and Prosper look for the body of Honoré, the corpse-strewn battlefield, the charge of mad, riderless horses, neglected and hungry; the discovery of the laughing Zouaves, lying at their ease on the sofa outside a house. Silvine mistakes them for living soldiers, triumphant. In reality, they are propped up on their knapsacks with death grins on their faces. And seven men kneeling in one line, with their guns raised to their shoulders, shot dead whilst in the act of firing. . ."

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Zola the basis, the master of film scenario description, of the selection of detail for expressive purpose?

* * *

Zola composed his novels strictly according to plan, in fact, with such highly organized method that a comparison with the preparation of the film scenario is inevitable. Block by block, chapter by chapter, brick by brick, documenting and gathering material as he proceeded, Zola progressed from novel to novel in the building of the vast tower of the *Rougon-Macquart* series, twenty volumes in all. "*The Rougon-Macquart, natural and social history of a family under the Second Empire.*"

Firstly, he would select his theme, soliloquise over it, select his central character from the genealogical tree of the *Rougon-Macquart*, proceed to his summary plan, then through succeeding stages of a detailed plan, environment, notes of other characters, for all of which he amass a pile of documents. The whole of the preparatory work was elaborate and calculating. The final writing and assembling of the book Zola would call the "editing." "He goes at it calmly, methodically. He writes four manuscript pages every day, almost without crossing out a word," writes Paul Alexis. "There were three primary sources of information: books which related to the past; testimony, either through written books or conversation, by persons at hand or experts; and finally direct personal observation by himself, on the field of action." For each novel "he would surround himself with a whole library on the subject treated; he would have competent persons to talk with him, whenever they could be approached; he would travel, see the

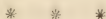
horizons of this subject, its people, its morals." All these documents were classified in folios, pigeonholed and labelled with great care, awaiting the assembly or editing. Zola called this system of documenting the constitution of a portfolio. It has its counterpart to-day in the efficient scenario-bureaux of the Soviet film industry.

It is impossible to make a film, write a novel, paint a canvas, unless the artist has absorbed the subject, the material, the people, the objects, the dialogue, the architecture, the atmosphere, the environment. For this reason there is nothing in contemporary life (as well as in the storehouse of the past) which should not be of interest to the film director. But the point must be stressed that Zola would always *reject* episodes or documents offered to him if they had no reason, if their logic did not enhance and strengthen his purpose.* This selection of material, which is a matter of intellect, experience, intelligence and creative impulsiveness, distinguishes the good film director from the bad. Genius lies in the application and the employment of the selected material for the expression of the idea, of the creative impulse. Zola refers to the business of documenting as simply the amusement of a mechanic directing the play of a thousand cog-wheels with meticulous care. But we must for ever be able to distinguish between mere recorded fact of documentary interest and the creative impulse that is the spring which builds such material into a work of art.

* c.f. Le Corbusier's maxim : " I shall find my clue in cold analysis. At each stage my duty will be to put the question : Why? Nothing has any right to exist which cannot give a precise answer."

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I think the popularity that Zola's books enjoyed, despite the antagonism in which the man was held, is of significance. All his novels sold in great numbers, creating records at that time for publishers. *Nana* reached many thousands; *L'Assommoir* reached the 100,000 mark in a few months. Zola was an astute showman. It was an age of learning, particularly among the lower classes and he believed rightly that great numbers of people enjoyed receiving information at a low cost about factories, department stores, the stock-exchange, the army, etc. It is only logical that the demand for information to-day is even greater, but it is for the cinema, with its great breadth and scope and far-reaching influence, to meet that demand. By such pictures as *The General Line*, *Turksib*, *Drifters*, *Finis Terræ*, *Moana*.



Thus there is much in modern cinema that was foreshadowed by the Naturalistic novel of Zola. Scientific method, the theory of environment, even scenario-organization and selection of detail is common to both forms of expression. Never, however, in making comparisons and drawing parallels must one confuse the literary outlook of the one with the cinematic outlook of the other. The strongest link between the Naturalism of the past and the Naturalism of the present is their joint aim, their ultimate end . . . Truth. Terms and labels are nothing. Zola, at the age of twenty, said to his friend Cézanne, "All art is one; spiritualist, realist are only words. . ."

I have taken liberties in snatching paragraphs from the book of Mr. Josephson. I feel, however, that there is so much to be learned from Zola to the gain of the *cinéaste* that

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the ravaging will be pardoned. Added to which, I gather that the author is unaware of the connection between his hero and the cinema, that he is unconscious of the service he has done in such careful analysis of the methods and working of the greatest of Naturalistic writers.

PAUL ROTH.

AS IS IN PARIS

In polyglot Paris in whose Boulevard cinemas sub-titles are projected both in English and French, a new "salle spécialisée" has made its appearance in which sound-films spoken entirely in English or American are presented. This salle is called the Cinéma du Panthéon and in its opening programme, the original American version of *The Love Parade* presented the opportunity of comparing the French with the American version, between which, I learnt, there is a very considerable difference.

The nature-film *Chez les Mangeurs d'Hommes* turned in the south seas by André Paul Antoine and Robert Lugeon, has broken all attendance records at the Cameo Cinema. It is certainly the most natural document of native life which has yet been made. There are definitely no real actors nor studio-shots to lend entertainment value. The photography is not constant, but these two Frenchmen, alone amongst cannibals and not knowing from day to day what the end of

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their film was going to be, had many hardships to face. Sound has in no way helped the film. The singing and talking of natives in a language which is unintelligible become eventually monotonous. It is certainly daring and very genuine and its success is a proof that the French public, at any rate, need not be continuously spoon-fed with misrepresented entertainment value in the form of cabaret scenes.

Vieux Colombier has concluded the run of *Menschen am Sonntag*, which was quite mildly received by the French critics. I consider it an excellent film not fully understood in France and which will without doubt be severely though unnecessarily cut in England. The film gives out more than was put into it. It is more than a documentaire of five young workers; many sequences typify German customs and above all German temperament. No one seems to have mentioned the brilliant photography of Schüfftan—carefully chosen "stills" from this film could, I feel sure, successfully fill one of those modern Parisian photo books. Vieux Colombier are now exclusively presenting Jean Epstein's latest film *Mor-Vran*, but having only seen the "stills" from this film which appears to be of the *Finis Terrae* genre, a criticism must await a later article.

Before terminating for the season, all the groups presented their final programmes. Group l'Effort paid homage to that grand old man of the Cinema, Georges Méliés, who in an informal speech amused us with stories of the pioneering days. *Voyage to the Moon*, known throughout the world as the first long film employing cinema tricks, was presented and followed by *Juif Errant*, the first film making use of superimposition and artificial thunderstorm effects; and

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lastly the coloured film *400 Coups du Diable*, which includes a performance of the box-trick done in record time, establishes Georges Méliés as a real pioneer of the world's cinematography. The same programme fêted the twentieth anniversary of the coronation of King George V by presenting a coloured film of the 1910 ceremonies in India, accompanied by a gramophone record of *God Save the King* repeated about twenty-five times! In contrast to these very old films, a representative 1930 studio programme was presented. The only really new film in this group was a montage-film of a Russian village, a short essay by Léonide Moguilevsky. From the very first pictures, I was reminded of the *General Line* and I learnt afterwards that the film is actually a montage from *General Line*, although this was not announced in order that the film, which is no more than a pretty pastoral elegy, should not be banned by the Censor who has instructions at present to ban everything Sovietic. It was interesting to view these pictures which are as beautiful as in Eisenstein's film and yet which lack the force which he only put into them.

In the Tribune Libre's Cavalcanti evening, we saw for the first time extracts from *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge*, which however did not give a very clear idea of the possibilities of this film. It was nevertheless glorious to see that curious picture of white Hessling on a black horse (see *Close Up*, February, 1930) come to life. Hessling has been given great scope to portray her oddities, and there is one magnificent piece of cinema when she, clinging to a wind-mill, revolves in the air. The last programme of the Tribune Libre's season was devoted to amateur films. Mr. Jacques Henri-

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Robert stressed the point that amateur films were mere "distraction" and were never intended to be compared with the commercial cinema. He next projected a number of short documentaires in which he had not attempted to produce anything beyond the limited means at his disposal and which were in consequence spirited and amusing. His next film *Cruautés* made in 1927 appears to-day a little banal. These were 9mm. films perfectly projected upon a screen sufficiently large to be viewed by 500 persons, by means of a special projector entirely built by Mr. Henri-Robert himself. We next had the long 16mm. film *J'avais un fidèle amant* by Francis Winter and Robert de Ribon. There are such perfect moments in this film that one entirely forgets that it has been made on sub-standard stock by amateurs. Most of the young French critics and makers of inferior standard-size documentaires did not acknowledge the beauty of this film, which if copied upon 35mm. stock and given adequate publicity would undoubtedly achieve a great success. Mr. Charles de Saint-Cyr, one of the justest of cinema critics wrote à propos of this film in *La Semaine à Paris* :—

"Quoi ! voilà deux amateurs et ils montrent plus d'intensité et tout à la fois de vérité que la plupart des gens de métier. Le sujet du film était un de ceux qui demandent sensibilité, goût, mesure, intelligence. Deux "promis" aux champs : une gardeuse de moutons et un jeune gars un peu naïf. Une affiche qu'ils rencontrent vante les engagements coloniaux, et voici le gars qui s'engage. La vie continue. Cette notion du temps qui, à la campagne, ne compte pas, est suggérée de la plus admirable façon. Au bout de sept

ans, il revient ; ils s'épouseront. Tout cela sur un rythme de veille chanson avec infiniment de poésie. Mais les auteurs ne s'en sont pas tenus à cette poésie ; leurs images sont d'une perfection qui les égale aux meilleurs réalisateurs professionnels. On s'extasie sur les films russes, souvent l'on a raison ; or, le film de MM. Winter et de Ribon ne leur est pas inférieur. Trop souvent, dans les films russes alternent de belles images et des calembredaines de propagande d'une sombre sottise. MM. Winter et de Ribon s'en sont tenus aux belles images. Leur film est une oeuvre fort noble. Je souhaiterais qu'elle pût être projetée à un large public. Ce serait preuve encore que le cinéma français vaut infiniment plus que ne prétendent certains intéressés dont bon nombre d'ailleurs des soviétisants de la plus pitoyable sorte."

The film is worthy of the space devoted to it here, and I admittedly prefer to quote M. de Saint-Cyr, an old man, rather than be considered over enthusiastic for amateur possibilities. At the conclusion of the séance, a jeune complaining of the lack of novelty in these amateur films, projected his surrealist production *Lait de Rose*, in which white roses float across the screen, castles are built from lumps of sugar and cream pours out of a telephone mouthpiece.

Attracted by an advertisement, I visited recently the Galerie de France and was most impressed by the designs by Boris Bilinsky for the décors and costumes of twelve films. His paintings are very colourful and where they are not always of the simplicity desired for perfect cinema one must realize that Bilinsky—even less than film-producers themselves — is not allowed the artistic

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freedom he deserves. Amongst ten "projets cinégraphiques" he exhibited two simplified sets of such design and colour as to be directly adaptable to the screen. The German straight line new simplicity appears to have influenced Bilinsky more than the French adoption of curves. There are some fantastic visions for a film *1975* which was conceived by Ivan Mosjoukine in 1924, but remained unturned. The original designs for *Shéhérazade* are admirably executed, and the costumes for the Ufa film *Le Diable Blanc* subtly convey an 1850 epoch. Bilinsky has designed the costumes for *Tarakanova*, produced by R. Bernard and at present being presented at Paris, and for once his valuable work has been acknowledged by his name being announced together with that of the producer and actors. Allowed freedom, Bilinsky could produce marvels, especially in simplicity, but he explained to me that when he designed, for example, a bare wall to give a certain effect, the producer would demand the addition of a banal picture to lend "that necessary atmosphere of warmth." Bilinsky in designing his décors considers lighting and camera-angle, but he maintains that the chief principle of lighting most films is to make the picture as bright as possible and consequently the atmosphere produced by the lights and shades in his original sketches is almost invariably lost. Bilinsky's contribution to Cinema is already extremely valuable and it is shameful that his name should remain in comparative oblivion owing to the prevailing system of booming "stars" only.

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

The photographs illustrating Boris Bilinsky's work were kindly presented by the Galerie de France, Paris.

TELECINEMA

The mountains of criticism are in labour for a ridiculous mouse.

Or :

One little exhibitor went to market and all the others stayed at home.

When will we become alive to what is going on around us ?

Chaffering about trade values of wide screens, we ignore developments which seriously threaten our megalomania. Say what we like (and most of us have little to say on the subject) television is spelt T E L E VISION.

The London Television Society (founded on September 7, 1927) reports a membership of six hundred. This membership, moreover, represents the imaginative ; experiments are conducted in chemical, mechanical and electrical components. Daventry devotes half an hour, for five mornings of the week, to television ; and half an hour for two evenings.

TeleVISION means more than talkies by the fireside : and it means that, too.

It means a new medium in which stage and screen will be happily commingled. (To-day voices are broadcast with mechanized, sound background.)

Besides making film renters and theatre owners caper. . . .

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When films started to be, intelligent people were unaware of anything but their petti-fogging intelligence. The present baneful group found inalienable jobs. Radio proved that some had profited by experience. Modern music IS broadcast and experimental plays. Television should find all the right people in at the start. It will do for entertainment what the revolution did for Russian films.

It means modern films will reach the public.

Glancing at achievement till now :

First demonstration of television by J. L. Baird was given before members of the Royal Institute on January 27th, 1926; the head of a ventriloquist's doll being transmitted from one room to another. Prior to this performance only the electrical transmission of silhouettes had been achieved. In the same year Baird discovered Noctovision, that is the utilisation of infra-red rays for the transmission of television signals. An image of a person seated in total darkness could be televised by this method, while the infra-red rays were able to penetrate fog or dense mist. Phonovision, also evolved by Baird, enabled scientists to store the image sound.

Distance, early bugbear, was conquered by Baird in 1928; the image of a well known personality being sent from a London laboratory in Long Acre to Hartsdale, a suburb of New York, where it was immediately recognized. Next, the image of a young lady was televised to her fiancé on board the *Berengaria* in mid-Atlantic. Stereoscopic and colour television quickly followed.

Critics declared that television was uncommercial, as a special wave-length was necessary for synchronism. Baird (on March 5th, 1929) controverted critics by using the broad-

casting facilities for a demonstration of self-synchronised television. He added the triumph of transmitting in daylight.

Jenkins in America, Belin and Holweek in France, and Mihaly in Germany have done empirical work.

Transmitting of film. Postage stamp effects, chiefly.

Before transmission of film remaining moments might be snatched for sporadic education. (Authorities promise film soon.) Straight television may mean more than seeing a face in a crowd on Armistice Day. An eclipse, say, could be televised all over the world; a work of art made familiar to all students. (This is only fair to teleV. as so many films of a purported future have shown base uses of visual broadcasting.)

Fundamentals are, possibly, abstruse. To fathom depths with a few words abridgements can be plucked from *Television*, the excellent review.

Suppose the sitter is placed in front of a scanning disc with small holes in it arranged equidistantly along an equiangular spiral of one complete turn. In the disc there are thirty holes. An electric motor rotates uniformly the disc at not less than sixteen revolutions per second. The disc is placed in the path of a beam of light. Now a perforated disc, rotating before a fixed light source, illuminates the face of the sitter with a travelling spot of light, so that the features are sub-divided into narrow light strips. Photo-electric cells are influenced by the picked up light; current pulsations are broadcast. The varying current is translated into varying light by a glow, neon tube. A spiral-hole disc runs, exactly in step with the disc at the sending station, in front of the neon tube.

At the moment of writing definition can be obtained with

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heads and busts, although a small image can be formed of a large object and this image scanned. This has been done with the greyhound races. The size of the image varies with the size of the scanning disc.

Under the existing conditions the best films for televising would appear to be absolutes dealing with masses of light and shade and specially contrived features of the "hand and feet" order. Defects will vanish when the unfortunate regulation of wave bands is altered for England. Newspaper print has been transmitted by employing a scanning disc with sixty holes. And televised news goes round the world seven times in one second!

It is steadying to remember that picture telegraphy, another Baird invention, is now widely used.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

STAR

Whence comes the mimic art of Irving Booth? Who has taught him to impersonate with such consummate perfection the Sheik, the naughty French Count, the Russian, the Clown with the Broken Heart? What school of art or of life has initiated him into the secret of giving to each of his many varied roles the touch that makes them kin with nature, to suit the action to the words, (he is in the talkies now), the

words to the action? . . . Weaker masters of the craft may out-herod Herod and tear a passion to tatters on the stage, but not Irving Booth, "the actor, who," in the words of a press-agent, "wields the power to sway the emotions of millions." He has a technique all his own, developed no one knows when, where nor how, but it is unmistakable, recognizable at a glance by the lovers of his art, like a trademark on a bar of soap or a gramophone. Observe the subtlety with which he handles a delicate, dramatic situation, the ease with which his face, his whole body, like some trained instruments, express jealousy, anger, affection!

It matters little what the plot is or where it is laid. *His* public knows exactly what Irving Booth will do in all situations. Is he called upon to give vent to the conflict of emotions rending the bosom of a betrayed husband? He shall not be found wanting. Indeed, when the supreme moment of agony arrives and the deceived lover in the familiar "eternal triangle" remains alone on the stage to wrestle with his burden, a hush, a silence of anticipation falls upon the audience as the master with a practiced gesture inserts two fingers between his celluloid collar and his neck, moving his head from side to side as if in an effort to free himself from the intolerable yoke of a too closely fitting collar. This classic gesture richly symbolic of emotional stress and copied, no doubt, because of its fidelity to nature by all the cinema actors of the Irving Booth school must forever remain a living contribution to the art of acting.

Nor is this all. When the vampire (so inimitably portrayed by Rosa del Oro), the falsest of false wives tries to

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seduce a heart-broken husband by a langorous embrace promising keener pleasures, the stage lover is never at a loss for an action suitable to the occasion. The public is not disappointed in its expectations. With a deft movement of the left hand he disengages her arms from his neck and with another equally deft stroke he violently throws the woman to the ground where she is left crouching and squirming, a prey to a guilty conscience, while *he*, "consumed by the struggling passions within his breast," as a shrewd critic remarks, "makes his triumphant exit."

The mirror thus held up to nature by Irving Booth and his "school" evidently reflects such a universal life-likeness that no matter whether it is the jealousy of a sheik, an Othello, a Middle West business man, a Chicago gunman, or a Russian nobleman, the task of translating their varied soul-struggles into dramatic action is reduced to the common international denominator of "the celluloid collar gesture" and the "cast her down to the ground" movement. To the cinema actor must be awarded the palm of discovering the few facial and bodily gestures by which the whole gamut of human emotion from the lowest note to the top of the compass may be registered by the simplest of means. Nor is the dear public ungrateful for this standardization of the dramatic art by which the secret motions of the soul may be divined at a glance, as the worship of Irving Booth and his clan by all the kitchen maids and their soul mates amply testifies.

The soulful kiss which serves as the denouement of all the plays of passion (and what cinema plays treat of anything but passion?) is perhaps the subtlest and the last of the inventions

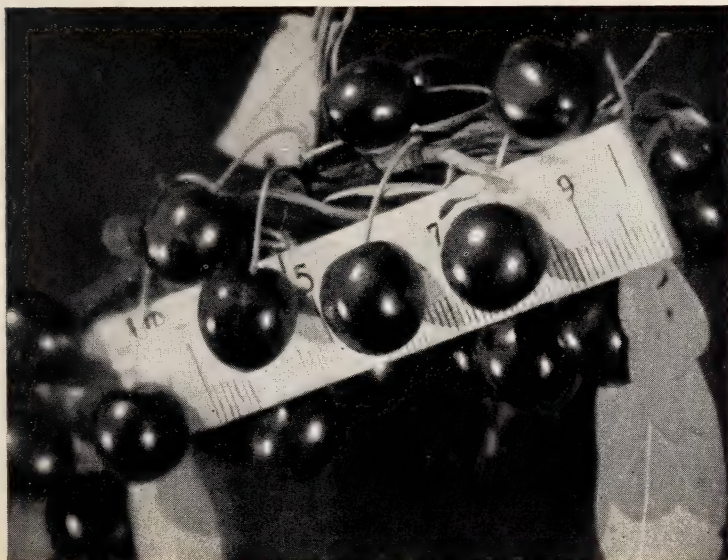
which together with the two gestures described above forms the whole stock-in-trade of the Irving Booth "school."

To the curious who are looking for "sources" a knowledge of Irving Booth's past will reveal but little on which to base a prophecy or a moral. Neither at school nor in his early youth at the soda fountain did he display those brilliant qualities which later made him "the talk of two continents," For the theatre and the drama as an art the youth showed none of that warmth of feeling or enthusiasm which would explain his future success. Nor does his contempt for amateur theatricals which he classed with cheap buffoonery help us to discover a clue to the mystery. The suggestion is here made for what it is worth that perhaps the fabulous salaries and ease of life of the movie stars may have turned the ambitious youth's mind towards the promised land. Self-confidence he never lacked and frequent attendance at the movie shows convinced him that no training or ability of any kind were necessary for the prospective actor. It was the general opinion of critics that the actor's forte lay in his clothes and his appearance. "Personality," "it" referred to the manner of wearing clothes. Here too critical opinion was divided between those who regarded certain favourites as showing to best advantage their "personality" in evening clothes and others who preferred the sheik's outfit. For the rest, the future aspirant to the stage felt himself as attractive physically and as developed mentally as his more lucky confreres.

"I don't care," said the super-producer, Silverspan, "whether this fellow can act or not; that's what I've got



Two interesting studies from the cultural film, *The Michurinsky Nursery Garden*. See article elsewhere in this issue. I. V. Michurin is experimenting in producing fruit trees and vegetables able to withstand the cold climate of northern Russia. Although this is a film that must contain much of interest, it is doubtful if we shall see it in England, for it actually shows the crossing of a wild with a cultivated peach to obtain the hybrid of an almond, which is crossed again with the hybrid of a peach to obtain a frost-resisting almond, and this no doubt, will be considered dangerous propaganda that might affect adversely the morals of British fruit trees.





Gavin Arthur in *Borderline*, a Pool film, directed by
Kenneth Macpherson.



Paul Robeson as Pete, in the same film.



Another study of Paul Robeson, reminiscent of early Egyptian carving, in the quality of light and shade.



A close up from a French experimental film, *Carnaval de Nice*.



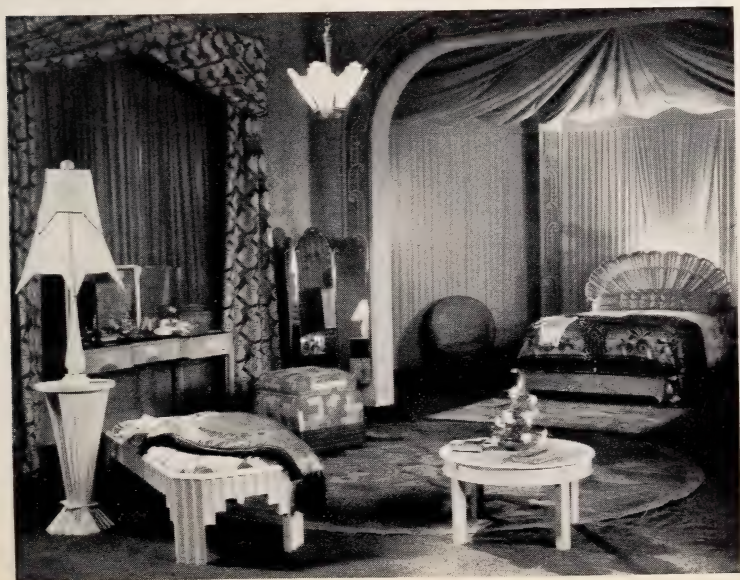
Modernistic furniture in a British film, *Greek Street*. Note the Victorian fussiness still persistent under apparently new forms, the oval on the wall, the screen and dust collecting ledges.



A modern set from *Les Nouveaux Messieurs*. Contrasted with the still above, its inviting restfulness is achieved by extreme simplicity, and not by multiplication of details. It will be comfortable to live in, and easily kept in order.



Two more sets from *Greek Street*, settings arranged by Andrew L. Mazzei. Notice again the Victorian rose effect of light and the flutings and general air of frilliness. How difficult too it would be to lift the heavy fur rug from under the dressing table when the room was to be cleaned.





The recruits in Universal's film of *All Quiet on the Western Front*.



The recruits training in *All Quiet on the Western Front*.



All Quiet on the Western Front in the making.



From the new Ufatone picture, *Murder for Sale*. Above microphones, cameras and lamps in action. Below, the scene with Lilian Harvey, as it will appear in the film.



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directors for. The young fellow has a face and a figure that'll please the ladies in my audience; that's enough for me. To my mind, the dumber the actor, the better. I will get my press gang to write him up, and before he is seen in his first play the public's mouth will water. Advertising is the secret. People believe anything printed if it's repeated long enough."

It was also Silverspan's far-seeing mind that ordered the christening of the new-born actor. "Half of the game is in the name," was the master's famous saying. "Now Irving used to be a great actor in the old days," he said to his director, "and Booth was another great actor. We can do better than that by calling this fellow 'Irving Booth'; half of the public will think that those actors are still living. . . ."

"Gee," the youth spoke up boldly, "with a name like this who wouldn't get up to the top?"

How the Irving Booth school will surmount the difficulties of the "talkie" problem is not hard to guess. The same spirit which embodied the best of the art of mimicry in their "dumb" acting will now perform similar service for them on the speaking stage. It is true that most of the actors have neither trained voices nor any knowledge of diction, but these trifles do not seem to bother them much the nonce. Once Demosthenes stood by the sea with his mouth full of dirt and practiced the speaking art; this "dirt" treatment has not yet been discovered by the talkie actors who speak with an accent which is neither that of Christian, pagan, nor man.

Some light on the career of Irving Booth and his rise in the cinema world was shed lately by himself in a speech he had

made before a crowd assembled to greet him on the return to his native city which now claims him among her illustrious sons.

"Friends," he began his speech, "your reception is not a tribute to me, it is a tribute to my art." He tasted the nectar of his own words and it went to his head.

"Friends," he continued after the applause died down, "if I stand before you today a success in my line, I'll tell you how I did it. It was first of all my mother. (Impressive pause and visible emotion in the large audience), and secondly my teachers. I started at the bottom, as you all know, delivering newspapers, (a chorus of 'you bet's'). Now you know that I hate to brag, but you know from the papers that I'm getting more good American dollars per week than the whole school faculty put together. ('Atta boy' chorus). My old man wanted me to learn 'an honest trade,' but I beat it out of town to make that Hollywood train on the way to success. ('You made it, too' chorus). Well, ladies and gents, I'm not much of a talker, but if you ever visit the old burg, come and see me. Just ask for plain Irving Booth and the cops will show."

The last words were drowned in the din of the ecstatic crowd.

MICHAEL STUART.

SHADOW OVER HOLLYWOOD

An ominous shadow lies athwart Hollywood. So far it has escaped the attention of the general public. But Hollywood itself, as personified by the producers, is very definitely and most uncomfortably aware of it. Amid a clashing of cymbals, the high priest of filmdom recently promulgated a code of cinema morals, under which the lid is to be clamped down on all vulgarity, naughtiness, brutality, suggestiveness, ridicule and much else that has heretofore speckled the films or given them character. And the world at large, while not knowing what to make of it, has assumed that through some inner conviction Hollywood has voluntarily gone puritan. In reality, however, this gesture of virtue—this self-imposed censorship—has a far more serious and logical significance. It is a tactical effort on the part of Hollywood to forestall a menace that is threatening the very life of the picture industry—national censorship.

Unknown to the busy world absorbed in its own affairs, there is a bill pending in Congress that has for its object the placing of Hollywood directly under the jurisdiction of the United States Government. It provides for the creation of a Federal Motion-Picture Commission, to be composed of five men and four women, empowered not only to censor all films

but also to supervise their production and regulate their distribution and exhibition. In brief, to quote directly from the proposed law, "The motion-picture industry is hereby declared to be a public utility"; and upon this broad, comprehensive foundation the bill now under consideration by a Congressional committee builds up a code of regulations, provisions and prohibitions which would virtually make Hollywood a mere servant of the Commission and subject to heavy and ruinous penalties for any infractions of its censorial authority.

Initially the contemplated law concerns itself with contracts, leases, and distribution; forbidding methods in restraint of trade, compelling free competition among producers and exhibitors, and, in general, paternally regulating the entire film trade. But that which outstandingly characterizes the pending statute, is its drastic censorship provision, whereby no less than twenty subjects or types of stories and scenes are specifically placed under the ban. These include sex appeal, vice, illicit love, adultery, drug addiction, underworld episodes, crime, brutality, bloodshed, violence, vulgarity, bedroom scenes, religious, racial or governmental partisanship, ridicule of national manners or customs, prolonged expressions of love or any other form of sex suggestiveness, as well as the use of suggestive, profane or improper language in the mouths of the actors.

All in all, the list of taboos closely parallels that of the Will Hays code, thus confirming the suggestion that this Hollywood voluntary code of prohibitions has been prepared and put into effect for the direct purpose of averting the enactment of the pending Congressional measure; or, in other words, of

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taking the wind out of the sails of its bigoted proponents. It is a bit of strategy full worthy of Will Hay's generalship. How well or to what extent it will succeed remains to be seen; and in the meantime Hollywood may well hold its breath.

The threatened law does not content itself with the mere listing of forbidden subjects and providing penalties for the violation of what it defines as "standards of production." It requires also, that every picture shall be produced under the personal supervision of a representative of the Commission. Which means, not only that every Hollywood studio will have a Government official installed in it, but also that no picture can be put into production until the very scenario itself has been viséed.

Where this direct supervision is impracticable, as in the case of travel pictures or current-news reels, the producer or owner of every such film must file a bond with the Commission in the sum of fifty thousand dollars, as surety against any infraction of the law's standards of production. And these standards, by the way, also include a prohibition against the showing of any film that may be construed as favouring or opposing a political candidate or as reflecting upon a public official or any governmental administration.

No producer or exhibitor may carry on his business without first formally registering with the Commission; and no picture may be released until it has been passed upon and approved by one or more of the commissioners in person and has received a specific permit; which permit, in the form of an official label, must be exhibited on the screen at every showing, under penalty of heavy fine in addition to confiscation of the film. Furthermore, this permit cannot be obtained without the pay-

ment in each instance of a fee, which is fixed at \$10 for each thousand feet of the original film and \$5 in the case of each additional print.

The Commission may at any time recall a licenced film, and, after review, revoke it on the ground that it violates the established standards of production. More than that, even after a film has been duly licensed and the Commission itself finds no subsequent objection to it, it may be withdrawn from exhibition if any three persons, whoever and wherever they may be, shall file an appeal against it.

Which is to say, by way of illustration, that if three members of the Prudent Prudes Society of Pruneville should consider their virtue imperilled at sight of Greta Garbo's knee, they may by a ten-word telegram of protest to Washington stop the showing of the offending picture everywhere through the entire country. And until their protests shall be acted upon by the Commission, however long a time it may involve, the film must remain in limbo; and should the Commissioners agree with the Prudent Prudes, it may never again be put into circulation.

Not satisfied with supervising, censoring and regulating the production, distribution and showing of films, the contemplated law extends the Commission's right of censorship to all advertising of motion pictures, whether on billboards or in newspapers or magazines. And if in the judgment of the Commission any such advertisement or notice is misleading in its statements or contains any illustrations or wording contrary to film standards of production, the producer of the picture in question shall have his license revoked, "even

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though such unlawful advertising has been done without the knowledge or consent of the owner of such film."

Penalties for violating the law or such orders as the Commission may issue, run from fines of five hundred to ten thousand dollars, and imprisonment from six months to five years. And each day during which any infraction of the law or disobedience of official orders shall continue will be regarded as a separate offense. Also, the film involved in the offence shall be confiscated and destroyed.

This, in very brief outline, presents the leading features of the national censorship bill now before Congress. Its arbitrary, Czaristic, and fantastically irrational provisions would seem on the face of it to preclude the possibility of any serious legislative consideration of it. But in view of the fact that personal investigation reveals that the measure is being actively supported by parent-teacher associations and other like organizations zealously pledged to moral reforms and pietistic ideals, the matter can neither be ignored nor laughed at as of no moment. It is all too emphatically a serious expression of that militant, determined element of bigotry which is ever seeking to impose its benighted puritanism upon a normal, self-expressive world. And while this proposed censorship law may possibly have no chance for enactment in its present drastic, inquisitorial form, its portent is nevertheless sufficiently substantial to cast a menacing shadow and to call for alert, defensive action.

CLIFFORD HOWARD.

THE WHITEMAN FRONT

Two articles in one. On two films. One article, because, poles apart, they both have something of the same thing (As poles do - ice, for instance). Size. Scope. So without being smart, without any more puns on that all-too-punned-on title, *All Quiet* and *The King of Jazz* together. Revue and war film which both mean something, some one thing. As well as size and scope.

I had been getting worried about talkies. I had been getting awfully worried. I have been getting awfully tired of people saying to me "What a pity it is about the Avenue Pavillion," and "There are so many good silent films we haven't seen. Can't you do something about it?" What could I do, and what do I want to do? I'll see the good silent films I haven't seen. I'd like a theatre where I could see them. But that's not the main issue. That's not working. It's marking time. Sound's marvellous, malleable, rich. We are lucky to have it. Cinema's wonderful and workable. We have it. We don't understand it, but we have it. We ought to understand it. But when sound comes along, as Bébé Daniels says (or doesn't she?) we've got to take awful pains to understand that, too. Sound only means we have got to understand cinema more than ever. We have got to take awful

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pains. Honest pains. Good job of work. Just as much getting down to it and all that as in coping with single cinema (honestly). Because dual sound-and-light cinema has to be something different, and if you don't understand single cinema first, it can't be. And I'm not so interested in "seeing the good silent films" that have been made, because after all they have been made, and good talkies haven't been.

I was getting awfully worried about talkies. They weren't doing anything. They were standing just as still as those who lament over silent cinema. Supposing when Pabst made *The White Hell of Pitz Palu* he had said "Man against the mountains. Sheer man against sheer mountain. I won't have mechanics spoiling Nature,"—then we shouldn't have had that most breath-taking, life-giving aeroplane sequence. And that's what I mean about refusing sound.

On the other hand what's the use of accepting it if nothing is done with it? What is the use of the pioneer *Movietone Follies of 1929* if all the *Movietone Follies of 1930* do is to take a Cook's tour down the same, still unexplored paths? I hated the thought of *All Quiet* after I had seen *Sergeant Grischa*. True, I never succeeded in reading the book, but we have no proof that Hollywood makes better films the better the subject, indeed quite the reverse. And I went to *All Quiet*, and I saw not only all the other war-films there have ever been (with the exception of the official Battle of Arras and some German official stuff) wiped out and collected and summarised in *All Quiet*, but a new kind of film, a real talkie. Made, too, by Universal in Hollywood. Quite remarkable.

What is so remarkable about *All Quiet* is that it isn't good, like so many American films, by accident. From the very first

shot it means to be. From the very first shot you feel the man knows what he is at. Lewis Milestone is a Russian. Troops going away, marching off. Women rose-flinging. How women have ruined roses—gallicised them. One woman, in far away 1914 dress, walking backwards as she waves to the soldiers. Why do we notice her? We are meant to. She's 'composition'; but she shows the man knows what he wants. The soldiers march by a classroom. Seen through two windows. Between the windows there is the blackboard and the schoolmaster. Sitting in the back row, we see the boys and the master and the troops behind. The master speaks, old-school stuff, about war. Of course it wasn't old-school then, it was the accepted thing. But the boys are bewildered at first. All this about their country in danger hadn't occurred to them. The old man's words draw them in slowly. They are slowly sucked in, till they rush out, believing of their own accord, throwing books in the air, and march by the windows, where the troops have marched by.

Training is hell. Petty reasonless bad treatment. Perhaps it isn't reasonless, it is making soldiers of them. But young, still spirited, they take revenge on their sergeant who ruins their last day's leave for them. Stretch a cord between the trees, drop a sheet on him, leave him in the mud. The war isn't hell so much as peculiar at first. They arrive. Older soldiers. No notice taken of them. They are fighting for their country, their country called them. It doesn't seem to take any notice of them. "When do we eat?" says one of them. The older soldiers laugh. Their efforts, as soldiers, the efforts they were going to turn into other things, are directed mostly at getting food. One of the minor themes

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of this film is the importance of food. War turns men into machines, but men have to get food in order to keep going, and food is hard and uncertain to get. Wolheim is very good as the old soldier. At first too boisterous, a bit too much of the "cockney spirit in the war," but that wears off or else it falls into place, and he is good with the new soldiers at their first shelling—and very good when one of them, blinded, goes staggering and screaming about No Man's Land, and is got, and one of them rushes out to bring them in. "Don't you ever do that again," say Katczinsky. He was one of us, a friend, says the young man. He is now a corpse to Katczinsky, and living men mustn't foolishly risk their lives for corpses. The first lesson. War ceases to be peculiar.

War is accepted—as hell. A hell of waiting. Waiting for food. Waiting in a dug-out while a bombardment goes on overhead. The awful effect of sand or earth dripping through at each fresh crash is right. Waiting while someone goes mad. And while others rush out. *All Quiet* is the first film I know where the screams of a man going mad are there, quite barely. And an attack and advance through a churchyard with graves shattered, crosses tumbling, as incidentals. You notice these things as incidentals, they slip into your mind; they would be unbearable if they were flung at your mind. But because the film gives you the big thing, the attack, the screaming and the going mad and the legs off slip in and make their effect because the mind isn't numbed by just sheer horror. Give the mind only horror and it is numbed and won't accept it. Give Dryer this, and we wouldn't have accepted it. Joan's agony was only incidental to her career, Dryer gave us only the agony (*en gros plan*, too) and

we said, this isn't Joan, there is more, she had more. We thought of the more there was and denied the horror.

That is why this film is so successful a re-creating of the book. The things you remember, Muller's boots, the French girls, the double rations at the beginning of the book are there, as incidentals, as they were in the book. But because the film sweeps on, with the seven boys being slowly destroyed, because it is dealing with something bigger, these things, boots and blindness, occur, get one and surprise one; "So this is there, too" one says. This means one is surprised because one is being given some big thing else, and these have slipped in in building it up. Size, scope. But also proportion as well. A remarkable film.

Mind in it, too. Not only a hard photography which gives the replicas of trench and shell-struck villages a reality we had thought never to find again, even in real villages and trenches; not only a use of mass and rhythm and all that. But sequences in which the rhythm is cerebral. The boys visit Muller in hospital, in a church that has been made a hospital. His boots have always been noticed. His leg has been amputated. Being now a soldier, it is natural, it is what we all feel . . . he won't want his boots any more, says one of them. Baumer says, ssh, don't let him know. But they are young; they are careful too late, Muller has noticed. He screams. The others leave.

Baumer stays on, and Muller dies. Muller dies among hundreds of other beds in the church, and Baumer can't find a doctor to come. The orderly says there have been many amputations to-day; which one is he talking about? And Baumer doesn't scream out heroics about he is my friend, he

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is dying, you cannot let a young man die. He knows they can. He knows they have to. He accepts the orderly as part of something. Muller's death, too, as part of something. And he does not forget the boots. I don't know why, but in this scene, one gets the smell of anaesthetics somehow. It maybe that the whiteness of the beds, oddly in a church, quicken one's nerves, but one gets it, and when Baumer, carrying the boots, comes out of the church and looks round, we feel the fineness of the day. Milestone has got over here the boy's feelings that he has seen someone die, his dim surprise at life going on, outside all the people moving, and then the boy's quick desperate welcome of the fact that he is still living, life is yours till it goes, his steps quicken, he runs and runs and arrives back . . . and has to say, Muller is dead, here are the boots.

The sequence of going on leave is not so successful as this or the swim over the river; just as the scene in the shell-hole with the bayoneted Frenchman does not come off, as the Dying Room one does. I think this is because Lewis Ayres, who plays Baumer, isn't strong enough to carry scenes by himself. In the Dying Room and the river he has help, but the other two depend largely on him and he doesn't bring them off. Leave is ruined, anyway, by Beryl Mercer being the mother, and her face and voice have such an unwholesome absorbent sickliness that you cannot forget *Medals*. I think Zasu Pitts had this part, but the Mercer woman had such a success in the Barrie-bilge that she was substituted.

Now, this is a sound-film as well as a war-film, and the sound is good. It can be studied again and again. No small point is that the shells, etc., are possible to listen to. One

does not leap out of one's seat, as one did when the bomb exploded in *Submarine*. But more important is this. There is dialogue. The men talk. But the men don't talk all the time. There is no set conversation as there was in *Journey's End*, so that one wondered why the indispensable Stanhope could be spared so long from the attack. The men talk where they happen to be and as they happen to have time. And when bombardment or duty stops them talking, they go on thinking, and that is preserved. So the dialogue takes its place, not only, for the first time on a large scale, with the other sounds of all kinds, but also with all the other mounting of the film. The mounting is quite good; witness the machine-gun. The film has at once a freedom and a form new to talkies. It has a scope and size new to war-films. It is on at the Regal and Alhambra in London simultaneously.

It is as good a version of *All Quiet* as we need. But being so good a film, having said it is, as a film, good, I can say what it deals with and why we want no more. There are few old soldiers in the film. *All Quiet* is youth's comment. Don't cry out against that, as everyone does, expecting one individual to represent the feelings of every type in all armies (if you want such composite expression, it is you that must read all the war-books, not the author who must combine them). *All Quiet* is meant to be the statement of the generation who were destroyed by the war though they might escape its shells. It is dignified and passionate. But it is youth all the time. In the film you notice again and again how very young they are, and that there are few others of any other age. And the point is that it is a youth that is no longer young. These boys who were at school when the war came are express-

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ing the youth of 1914. But I am not sure that the youth of 1914 felt that then; I think Remarque feels it in retrospect. Anyway, they are not youth now, though the film and the book are specifically youth's cry against war. It is 1914 youth's cry . . . and it is made in 1930. It is a cry against the waste of war, against slaughter and destruction. But it ends there. What is 1930 youth to do? Nineteen-thirty youth agrees, it stretches out its hand, but it says there is something more. It says, this is the foundation. But what it wants to see, what it needs terribly to see is peace made an honest job of. Guts and all that. War is not bad only because it demands the kind of guts so many haven't got; it's criminal and senseless because it destroys and ruins so much else that people have got. And peace does that, too. Peace does that because it is not understood; because people get caught up in it in a different way, but caught up the same as they were caught up by the war; because so many people waste peace, as war once wasted them. 1930 youth knows peace is a thing to be grappled with, and after *All Quiet* (which has a negative value, a marvellous inspiring way of shouting "NO") 1930 youth needs very strongly, if all that isn't to be wasted, an equally fine and stirring "YES." It needs to be shown what there is to do, what outlets must be made, what the new life means. It needs to be trained, as much as those boys were trained. It needs joyful, constructive, adventurously serious films. And it needs to know where they are coming from. And can one go on saying Russia, when Russian films go on being not seen? And why should Russian be the only films? Why should Russia be the only country that lives a 1930 life? that knows there are thrilling

things to be done? Politically, the answer is obvious . . . take the answer or leave it, but a sense and an expression of ordinary life as something to grapple with and be grappled by is what we need. And *All Quiet*, surprisingly good and technically interesting as it is, doesn't do that.

* * *

Keeping size and scope solely as our bridge, leap from that to *The King of Jazz*. It is a big film. *The Hollywood Revue* was not. We all know what fools Universal made of themselves over the beginning of this film. But here it is, and it does entertain, in the way revues entertain. The colour is pleasing, funny new things are done with shadows in colour and there is a coloured cartoon in the Mickey fashion. The colour in *The Song of the Flame* was better, there it was worth a visit alone, lovely clear tints and even pure-ish whites, and by the end of *The King of Jazz* one is tired of the particular kinds of red and blue. One only sits through thinking how good it will be when yellow and emerald and violet come through. But *The King of Jazz* does move snappily, it is a unity and it has strange bits of composition. Nice things happen; though not nice enough. When a pattern is made of two heads and a mirror, so that there are four Beaton-ish heads, that is all right, but we have to watch them sing, and they might have done so much more, revolved or refracted. William Kent is delightful, and has some good sketches, and Laura la Plante, whom I hate, is funny and efficient. These two bring the humour up to a Cochran, if not to a Charlot, level, and that is no mean feat, as they say, in a film designed for the world markets J. D. Williams talks (and only talks) so much about. The dancing in *Monterey* is pleasant; through

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all the numbers there is quite an attempt at mounting, but particularly in this one. And the colours, the black and silver and the technicolour red are positively Manet—in movement. Then, and above all, there is Jacques Cartier's Voodoo dance. Drum, drum, drum, and a black nude figure dancing on a drum, in blue shadow. Very cleverly photographed so that one thinks perhaps there are two dancers, as the shadow is flung. The man has an enormous feather head-dress, and nothing else—or nothing else that is visible, and he dances. While the drum beats and nothing else. Doom, doom, doom, doom, doom. DOOM. Always one more than you can bear, one more than you expect. Doom, doom. This is marvellous.

But this heralds the *Rhapsody in Blue*, and here is the fault of the film, which sets out to have unity and shirks the real one inherent to it. *The King of Jazz* they call it, and a pre-tentious finale shows the music of the nations merging in the melting pot of America to form . . . jazz. As interpreted by Whiteman, understood. For some extraordinary reason men in pink coats sing *John Peel*. TOO embarrassing. But Africa is not there. Jazz, but no Africa! The only hint of jazz's debt to Africa is in the cartoon which opens the film, where Whiteman is humorously set "In wildest Africa." And the Voodoo dance is the best thing in the film. Why is there this unfairness to the Negroes? Isn't it perhaps because Whiteman no longer has the success he had, and this is due to the great popularity of Negro bands? Armstrongs and Duke Ellington's records sell in thousands, when they used to sell by the score. But Whiteman's don't sell in Harlem, though these now go up and down the States. And then, looking at the film, may it not be that this is Whiteman's

come-back? If not that, his way of stopping a slip-down. To get at huger audiences via film. Whiteman's stuff, as one listens to it, is definitely and unchangeably old-fashioned. There's no thrill any more, no interest. One hardly notices the band in this film. It is very slick, that's all. Naturally Whiteman isn't going to harm his great effort by putting the new jazz Negro players alongside, or even by acknowledging his debt. And here we have the *Rhapsody in Blue*. Why bring that up? It has been played as well as it can be often enough; why not have something else? A film of this sort ought to have something new written for it, a darker rhapsody in a darker blue. It was played by my band, it was my greatest success, says Whiteman, looking back. Why look back? Why star the Rhapsody? It is old jazz, and so he knows how to play it. But John Murray Anderson does not know how to stage it. Or any of the scenes. The staging and the dresses are terribly dull and disappointing. The film, of course, does not take advantage, as we say, of more than a handful of camera tricks. But it is the best film-revue we have had (*Paramount on Parade* we have just not had yet), and it is something to be grateful for after *High Society Blues* and *Children of Pleasure* and *Puttin' on the Ritz* and *Fox Movietone Follies of 1930*. It has sweep and colour and wit and movement; mass and a little mounting and none too bad music . . . though the very best song of all is ruined by the most appalling person I have seen since Anita Page in *Broadway Melody*. She is called Jeanie Lang, and is technically known as a "boop-a-doop queen," I am sure she is. But then, it's a big film, and there's room for other things, such as William Kent, thank God.

ROBERT HERRING.

IL PARLE . . . LA BELLE AFFAIRE

There is a conceited fellow about town who talks always and everywhere on this subject.—*Hazlitt*.

Exprimer verbalement sa pensée ! Quelle ivresse, enfin ! pour un muet d'origine ; quel déluge de sons à peine articulés. La pellicule bavarde ne se tient plus de joie, et son petit ruban strié de confidences, grâce à la complicité du sélénium, débite à qui veut l'entendre, tendres aveux et touchantes romances. Parfois, aussi, l'image, qui veut avoir les coudées franches, se fait accompagner de la synchrone rotation d'une galette musicale à tel point sensible qu'elle ne résiste point au chatouillement du pick-up. A bonne distance, dissimulé, car il n'est point esthétique, un volumineux haut-parleur, à son tour mis au courant, ne sachant rien garder, publie avec assurance les secrets qui d'aiguille en fil s'acheminent à son tympan métallique.

Le panatrope a ceci de commun avec les installations cinématographiques sonores, qu'il amplifie à l'excès et, par là, déforme les sons. Le gramophone, plus respectueux des lois de l'acoustique, conçu pour recréer un auditoire restreint, demeure d'une harmonieuse discrétion. La qualité du son est donc inévitablement sacrifiée, dans nos salles obscures, aux exigences d'une audition groupant un nombreux public.

Et comme le cinéma, nous le constatons tous les jours, semble vouloir singer désormais le théâtre, qu'il espère même supplanter dans un avenir prochain, nous sommes bien fondé à signaler à ce parvenu qui déjà dédaigne les principes fondamentaux qui lui valurent d'être considéré comme un art indépendant, qu'il ne saurait jamais être qu'un puissant vulgarisateur. Sans doute, est-ce déjà bien quelque chose. Mais, perpétuant, multipliant même, les moyens faciles au détriment de l'introspection et de l'analyse psychologique, faisant appel aux clameurs du saxophone, aux banalités du dialogue pour suppléer à l'insuffisance notoire de l'inspiration et de génie descriptif de l'auteur, il s'éloigne inévitablement de ce que l'on est convenu d'appeler le langage mystérieux des images. Ce langage là, quoi qu'on en dise, n'appelait aucune confirmation verbale, et, en troquant le silence contre la parole, le cinéma s'est rapproché sans doute de l'expression populaire mais il a perdu, par contre, cette faculté de suggestion dont la délicatesse, la suavité, faisaient le charme subtil et pénétrant.

Il parle ! Et que dit-il ? Rien que nous n'ayions mille fois entendu et qui ne nous fasse l'effet d'un échange conventionnel de mots. Ses duos d'amour sont désormais de la plus plate sentimentalité : *Prix de Beaute*, *La Route est Belle*, *Hai-Tang*, et presque tous les talkies Made in U.S.A. en offrent de significatifs échantillons.

Il chante . . . et ce ne sont que très populaires refrains pour midinettes rêveuses et sportifs en tournée. Voir chanter, c'est à dire ne contempler vingt minutes durant (épargnez-nous tout au moins les gros-plans !) que les I et les O formés par les lèvres de l'acteur, tandis que, fixes et stupides, les yeux trahissent l'effort d'une performance sans attrait visuel, quel sup-

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plice ! Voir, d'autre part, telle équipe de musiciens, à qui le mot d'ordre est donné de sourire (quels sourires !) et de s'extasier sur l'habileté du soliste, ceci, en vérité, n'offre aucun intérêt.

Ils parlent, ce cher Harry, cette idéale Dolorès, ils chantent même, dites-vous ! En français, en anglais, en allemand ! C'est tout simplement merveilleux. Hélas ! ils articulent, tout au plus, d'autres, obscurs salariés, y vont de leurs poumons.

Il parle . . . la belle affaire ! Prêtons-nous l'oreille à tous les propos !

FREDDY CHEVALLEY.

THE MICHURINSKY NURSERY GARDEN

A Cultural Film in 6 parts. 1,871 metres. Sovino production. Director : V. F. Svetozarov. Operators : V. Popov and N. Yudin.

This film depicts the achievements of the I. V. Michurin Experimental Station in the town of Kozlov. Very remarkable things and phenomena are shown in it.

I. V. Michurin has cultivated new species of plants by way of hybridisation. Combining various hereditary features of plants he has produced new forms of them. It is difficult to credit that, in the northern climatic conditions of Central

Russia, it would be possible for such delicate southern plants as, for instance, grape-vines, almonds, walnuts, peaches, apricots, etc., to develop and bear fruit. And yet it is a fact that these plants do live through the winter in the I. V. Michurin nursery garden in the open air, without artificial heating.

The film shows how I. V. Michurin achieves these results.

By means of elaborate multiplication the film exhibits the process of fertilisation in plants. I. V. Michurin has performed a number of interesting operations on the flowers of plants. He chooses the best buds, castrates them, and effects artificial fertilisation. By this means two different plants are artificially combined into one. Side by side with artificial fertilisation I. V. Michurin produces, in the event of the plants not crossing with one another, vegetative approximation by means of grafting. The grafting produces an approximation of species and, when they flower, it is possible to cross them. For instance, a tomato is grafted on a potato. If the pure species do not cross with one another directly, then I. V. Michurin creates hybrid forms by way of crossing, for instance a wild peach with a cultivated peach. Having procured in this way the hybrid of an almond, I. V. Michurin crosses the hybrid of an almond with the hybrid of a peach and obtains new forms—for instance, a frost-resisting almond, grape-vine, etc. In order to procure new forms of plants, I. V. Michurin employs various external means of influencing plants: the action of spirit vapour, ether, employment of vegetable and animal extracts and, finally, various “surgical” operations. The material relative to the above is illustrated in this film and is of a most valuable, basic and striking nature.

P. A.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

. . . . THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED !

We understand that an attack is shortly to be made amongst others on *Close Up*, because of alleged propaganda for Russian films. While we are very interested to know that we are supposed to have done so much for Russia we must point out that our main object has been to provide a place where the intelligent English may read of new developments in cinematography and be kept in touch with the best films, whether made in England, Russia, Japan or the North Pole. *Close Up* is not and never has been a political paper. Not that we are afraid of being dubbed "left" or "right" or even "centre." Minds thus preoccupied are not our aim. It happens that we are concerned solely with cinematography as an art and prefer to deal with films untrammelled by affiliation with any political party. That *Turksib* with its portrayal of the building of a transcontinental railway should appeal more to the English with their tradition of adventure, than the many sequences of girls in nudity-with-jewels, is extremely distressing no doubt, to the conservative film element. But unhappily we have abundant proof in *Close Up* correspondence that our readers are in-

telligent beings. It may seem absurd even to answer the queries about to be hurled at our heads. But as the days of fair play and reason seem to be past, we should like to remind our readers that we have reported the French avant-garde film beside the Sovkino production, the amateur one reel with the English cultural experiment, the Hollywood super together with the German art film, that we are entirely unconcerned with party politics, and have from time to time stated so in our pages.

We spend thousands a year on treatment of sickness, when, if we provided the proper nursery schools only a fraction of the amount would be necessary; there are still hundreds of schools on the Black List, and many children in these days of supposed civilization are walking six and eight miles a day through all weathers, and with little or no facilities for drying rain-wet clothes, to get what education they can in a class of fifty others. We make little attempt to apply the vocational training methods that are being more and more extensively used in other countries. We make, in fact, little or no attempt to save or use wisely the money that *Close Up* readers among others are paying to the tax collector. Any party confronted with concerns as grave as these who can waste its time and the ratepayers' money quibbling over small-time party jealousies instead of using its power to help work out a constructive policy in respect of education, unemployment, and the various crises in trade and commerce, is in need of extensive self-searching and re-organisation. Let it judge not that it be not judged!

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

BRYHER.

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We regret that owing to a printer's error, Monsieur F. Chevalley was not credited with the Sommaire Resumé, which he had selected and translated from articles in the issues of *Close Up* between January and June for the benefit of our foreign readers. Our thanks are due to Monsieur Chevalley for this work and our apologies that it was not ascribed to him in the Contents list.

BOOK REVIEWS.

FROM AMERICA.

Will it be necessary for *Close Up* to change its descriptive title to "The first Magazine Devoted to Films as an Art," for we have before us the first number of a new American monthly *Experimental Cinema* (1629, Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Penn., U.S.A.) which describes itself as the only magazine in the United States devoted to the principles of the art of the motion picture.

Cinégraphs, whose names are familiar, have contributed to this first number dedicated to Form and Montage.

H. A. Potamkin has criticized Bryher's *Film Problems of Soviet Russia*. An extract from Pudowkin's *Film Direction and Film Manuscript* specially translated from the German, forms an article, although the complete work has already been published in an English edition. Seymour Stern writes upon the *Principles of the New World Cinema*, quoting from Eisenstein's article in the May, 1929 *Close Up*. *Dynamic Composition* is an interesting survey by Alexander Bashky,

who we learn, appeared twenty years ago as the first and classical film-aesthetician.

It would hardly be just to criticize adversely the slight lack of "finish" in this number, for first numbers rarely foretell the exact style and form a new magazine will eventually develop, and in this reference I would like to pay a personal tribute to the present-day numbers of *Close Up* which contain nearly twice as many pages and eight times as many photographs as did the first number.

Best wishes for the future of *Experimental Cinema*, which is attempting to establish the Cinema as an art in a country which recognises it almost solely as an industry.

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

PUBLISHERS.

In a search for interesting film literature, we have discovered the Malik Verlag, Berlin, whose aim is to popularize serious and valuable literature by publishing important works at extremely moderate prices.

Panzerkreuzer Potemkin, a little stiff-covered book priced at 1 mark is an example of the excellence of Malik's policy. The book by F. Slang, a well-known German journalist, is the actual story of the 1905 sailors' revolt, taken from authentic Russian documents and portrayed in a vivid and exciting style. The illustrations are actuality photographs—five of the original 1905 pictures and ten of the finest "stills" from Eisenstein's *Potemkin*.

Another 1 mark buchlein from the same publishers is

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Maxim Gorki's *Der 9 Januar*, an account of the events which took place in St. Petersburg upon that memorial date in 1905. The cover is a simple and powerful specimen of John Heartfield's celebrated photo-montage—very crimson blood-stains mounted on to a photograph of fallen citizens. The illustrations are again original photos and also realistic "stills" from Wiskowski's *The Black Sunday*.

In the Malik edition is to be found the translation of Upton Sinclair's *Zimmermann*, an adventure which is caused by the hero attempting to see three years after the war, in a cinema in Western City a film produced in Germany.

Malik have just published *Das Leben der Autos* by Ilja Ehrenburg, whose *Jeanne Ney* will not be forgotten. For a cover design Heartfield has wittily mounted the heads of the motor kings, Ford, Citroën, Rakowski and Deterding upon playing-cards in order to illustrate the quotation "History is a card-player—great men are only the knaves with which she trumps."

Though deploring to its utmost the furtherance of the "star system," one is unable to ignore a new German film-picture-book *Die göttliche Garbo* by Franze Blei and published by the Kindt and Bucher Verlag, who published the popular *Film-Photos wie noch nie*. To those who enjoyed Robert Herring's appreciation of Garbo in last month's *Close Up*, which in addition, published two photos of the irresistible one, this book will be a joy and a revelation. The text and Garbo's afterword are unimportant as is nearly always the case of introductions to modern picture-books. But the photos! Nearly fifty of them! Garbo the innocent, Garbo the wicked, Garbo the mother, the flapper, the gor-

geous vamp. Passion with John Gilbert, meditation in *Totentanz der Liebe*, close-ups from all angles out of *Anna Christie*. Only one picture from *Gösta Berling* and none from *Joyless Street*. The photos have been beautifully reproduced and the pages are quite tastefully balanced. An English edition is now in course of preparation to meet the already great demand in England and America. Only those who do not like Garbo will not like this book. Garbo is wonderful and only Beachcomber has dared to say that that grand character in English fiction, Olive Cork is "Greta than Garbo."

Following on their amusing attack on the Censor, *Mother Goose Rhymes*, Messrs. Alfred A. Knopf, New York and London, have published *Not on the Screen*, the last novel written by Henry B. Fuller before his death. The book is a delicate travesty of a Hollywood film plot and comparisons are continuously made between the actions which the characters *really* do and those which they *would* have done on the screen. The present state of the Cinema as well as the public attitude towards it is rather aptly summed up in a phrase in the opening chapter :

In the lobby Howell said : " They might have worn simpler clothes and have lived in smaller rooms with quieter furniture, and have had a less exciting way of spending their evenings. . . "

The girl laughed. " Yes, they might have shown more mentality and better manners; and their grand affair might possibly have been raised to a higher plane. But the screen is the screen. . . Is that our bus ? "

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

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THE POLITICAL, EDUCATIONAL AND DOCUMENTARY FILM.

Teakinopechat, 1929.

The fifty-four pages of this little volume consist almost entirely of reproductions of stills from various classes of Russian cultural films—travel and ethnographical films, news films, political propaganda films, scientific films and films illustrating all kinds of other phenomena and activities in various regions of the vast territories of the U.S.S.R. In his preface to the album, K. Shutko apologises for the shortcomings of Soviet achievements in the domain of cultural cinematography, but probably not all admirers of Russian films will share his regret that the cultural film has not been more consistently dominated by the aim of political enlightenment and will think that the interest and variety of the films exhibited in this album call rather for admiration than apology; certainly they afford convincing testimony of the wide range of research and achievement that has been and is being accomplished in the U.S.S.R., and are therefore in themselves a striking example of that indirect propaganda, which is often far more effective than the direct variety.

K. Shutko attaches special importance to the "chronicle" or news film—in accordance with the view of Lenin, who said: "The production of new films, permeated with communistic ideas and reflecting soviet activities, must start with the news film"—and he pays a special tribute to Vertov, the pioneer in this category of Russian film. As a matter of fact, the photography of the Soviet News-Chronicle film began on

the very first day of the October Revolution, and at the present time the Sovkino Cultural Film Factory issues a weekly journal, of which the 200th number was issued in April, 1929. The news-film material is preserved in special museums at the various film organizations and is used for incorporation in other so-called "documentary films"—i.e., films based on photographs of scenes from actual life.

The films illustrated in this album date between 1926 and 1929, and the majority of them are Sovkino films, but other film organizations, such as Vufku, Mezhrabpom, etc., are also represented. They include a number of extremely interesting travel films, such as *The Gate of the Caucasus*, *The Country of the Nachkho* (Chechen), *The Roof of the World* (The Pamir), *The Heart of Asia* (Afghanistan), which not only afford striking illustrations of the scenery of these regions, but also of the natural resources and the mode of life in little-known districts and among little-known tribes.

Among scientific films there is the famous *Mechanics of the Human Brain*, embodying the results of Professor Pavlov's investigations into conditioned reflexes (made by Mezhrabpom in 1926) and a more recent film, *The Problem of Nourishment*, concerned with questions of digestion and nourishment, also based on the researches of Professor Pavlov and made by Sovkino in 1928. Then there is *The Fight for Health*, made by Sovkino in 1928-9 and illustrating the achievements of ten years of Soviet medicine, and *Alcohol*, made by Sovkino in 1929 and designed to show the evil effects of alcoholism. *A Day in the Day-Nurseries of the City* gives a pleasant and instructive picture of the work that is being done in these institutions for the protection of mother-

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hood and infancy, and *The Struggle for the Harvest*, made by I. Kopalin for Sovkino in 1927, is a forerunner of Eisenstein's *General Line*, being designed to promote the collectivization of agricultural work and the improvement of the harvest; this film is entirely based on documentary material.

The film, *The Sixth Part of the World*, (Sovkino 1926-7) was made by order of the Gostorg (State Trading Organization), and comprises illustrations of the activities of the inhabitants and the natural conditions in various parts of the U.S.S.R., with a view to showing the exporting possibilities of the country. Among the political and historical films is *The Fall of the Romanof Dynasty*, made by E. Shub for Sovkino in 1927, described as "an authentic cinema document of the near past." Another film, *In the Country of Lenin* is concerned with the arrival of foreign workers' delegations in the U.S.S.R., and was made specially for foreign countries. Then there are films showing the industries of the country, such as *Petroleum*; another, made by Gosvoinkino (State Military Cinema) is concerned with the use of tanks, chemical weapons, etc., etc.

A very interesting album, but for the English public a tantalizing one, because it whets an appetite which at present cannot be satisfied without a visit to Germany or Russia.

W. M. RAY.

ANTHOLOGY.

Imagist Anthology, 1930 (Chatto and Windus. 6s.): poems by H. D., William Carlos Williams, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, etc.

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H. D. who has done so much for films by writing about them in *Close Up* and acting for them in POOL films; H. D. whose poetry is so beautiful that it hurts.

There are other reasons why the cinéaste should buy the anthology.

Glancing at Joyce's *Tales Told from Shem and Shaun* one begins to imagine an esperanto for the screen. Talkies need not stay in the country of their origin if words are built up in the imagist way. Can we really think that we are doing anything with sound until we have done this with language? Would those who still rebel against speech be converted by a Joycian Conception of dialogue?

O. B.

Thought varies from generation to generation and even in these days of quick travel, the youth of one country knows very little of how its own age group in another is regarding its same problems. Those who are interested will find the second number of *Der Neuen Jugend*, which has just reached us, a guide to what the young Austrian is considering and arguing with regard to all branches of art. Our Viennese correspondent, Miss Trude Weiss, has written for the paper an excellent summary of modern film tendencies. While much of the material will be familiar to *Close Up* readers, it is presented in a new way, and the magazine, being unpretentious and direct, gives more of the vitality and interest of modern Austria than could be found in a larger and more established journal. The photo montage of the cover is excellent. *Der Neuen Jugend* can be obtained from Schickplatz 4, Vienna IX, Austria, and the quarterly subscription is S1. 60.

TWO DIRECTORS.

Mr. Joris Ivens, who has been looking round the London studios, told me that 900 cinemas are wired in Holland. Towns with only 6,000 inhabitants possess a wired theatre. Talkies are played in French and English; those with plenty of songs are preferred as they do not require such an accurate knowledge of the vernacular to be appreciated.

Holland, Mr. Ivens, hopes, may be able to win for itself a certain place in European production as French, English and German are taught in the schools. The climate, however, is hardly propitious. It was while Mr. Ivens was sitting with bowed head in a Dutch café, cursing the perpetual rain which would not let him work, that a friend had the idea that he should film *Rain*.

The "gladery" of amateurs will be great when they learn that *Zuiderzee* was the first film for which Mr. Ivens was commissioned. *The Bridge* and *Breakers* were made on individual initiative.

Mr. P. C. Barua, an Indian producer who has finished three pictures for British Dominion, is in London to look at the "laboratories." Luckily he believes "laboratories" are all the West can teach. The ideas of the native film can never interest the West while they strive to be Western. Mr. Barua trusts that the West will, eventually (after the "laboratories" have been studied), be interested to learn the true native traditions and customs.

"I will tell you," said Mr. Barua, "the secret about the Indian film. Some nations express themselves in dance. others in sport, but we are thinkers. We start a film; there

is an argument; we forget about the argument and the film. By nature we are lethargic; by force of circumstances we have had to learn to be dependent. We are better at writing books. Do you know that in India so many books are sold, on an average, at the big book stores that business could not be brisker if they were situated in the Boulevard Raspail? And there is the censor. Bars against religious themes and the making of any stranger into a villain. Are you troubled with the censor in England?"

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

CONVERSATION.

Mr. J. E. said, "Mechanised music is not of a Robot world. Creation remains: the interpreter vanishes. And how musicians hate the interpreter. Artists would cry out if their pictures had to be copied by skilled craftsmen before being exhibited in public."

I suggested, "Mechanised music and mechanical music?"

He answered, "Such a difference between contraband charm of the barrel-organ and admiration for a piece executed with emotional significance on the pianola. A period of incubation. Mechanised music means the release of music from mathematics. A fugue by Bach is ten times more mechanical than an ordered arrangement of sounds plucked from life. We have been promised that the sonorous film means something bigger than conventionalised music. Wasn't it Meisel who talked of celluloid records in a library: the mounting of the thousand sounds of daily life."

CLOSE UP

“ Won't it be too sentimental? Won't these sounds recall someone spoken to, someone parted from?”

(Firmly) “ Work must never conform to a *priori* theory. Remember that machines do not change us; they establish new relations psychologically interesting.”

O. B.

EXHIBIT.

Snapshots by royal photographers on view in Pall Mall East. *Pictures* by royal photographers, vide press. So far Golovnia and Tisse have not signed the visitor's book.

The italics are anybody's.

O. B.

PHOTOGRAPHIES MODERNES PRESENTEES PAR PIERRE BOST. (A. Calavas.)

When you untie the white tape, the twenty-four photographs fall out, and so does Pierre Bost's introduction, but otherwise the arrangement is convenient, and not least for the advantage of being able to re-adjust the order of the plates.

The introduction is short and sufficiently enlightened to be entitled to retain its privileged place at the beginning. Quotation is necessary. [“ Les photographes d'aujourd'hui estiment qu'un visage exprime bien assez par lui-même et que leurs habiletés ne pourraient beaucoup y ajouter.] Leur plaisir est plutôt de jouer la difficulté, d'interroger les objets qui semblent n'avoir rien à dire; une fourchette, un uont, un oreiller, un pavé.” “ Le photographe pour découvrir dans l'objet connu, l'objet inconnu, a choisi le moyen le plus imprévu, et,

comme bien souvent, le plus simple : séparer l'objet du monde, et ne regarder que lui-même. Il y a une éclatante nouveauté dans toute chose, aussitôt qu'on lui accorde le droit d'exister pour soi-même. . . . Tel est proprement le rôle de la photographie : isoler, pour rendre étrange ce qui est familier."

We know that many photographers do try (with varying degrees of success) in isolating an object " en faire la matière d'un miracle," but whether photography should assign this limit to itself is another matter. The formula would hardly cover the work of Man Ray, Bruguere, or, say, Maurice Tabard. Though one may prefer to argue that these artists are perverting the camera to ends more suitably attained in a different medium. In any case the introduction should be read as a whole, since the principles of photography cannot be invoked to justify an isolation of this sort !

The photographs themselves have been chosen with discrimination, and some are outstanding. Those by Tabard appeared in *Bifur* where the second (Pl. 23) was balanced by another which might well have been included in this volume. A bold, even violent, use of light and dark distinguishes much of his work.

Meanwhile, impatient, we are waiting. . .

H. A. M.

TOUCHING UNANIMITY. (The more we are together.)

" The pictures of amourous passages, many of which, according to his (i.e., the native's) ideas, are very indecent, give him a deplorable impression of the morality of the white man and, worse still, of the white woman."

CLOSE UP

(Extract from article by Sir Hesketh Bell, G.C.M.G. in *Sunday Times*, 16th Feb. 1930.)

* * *

“ The establishment of a Board in London . . . to censor all films for exhibition in Tropical Africa, is a practical suggestion which will readily commend itself to all those who have the best interests of the native races of these dependencies at heart, as well as the prestige of Europeans.”

(Extract from letter signed E. B. Jarvis, published in *Sunday Times*, 23rd Feb. 1930.)

* * *

“ . . . There is no gainsaying that the silly tosh often portrayed on American films does materially help to lower the prestige of the “ white man ” in the eyes of the unsophisticated native.”

(Extract from letter signed Pee Jay in same issue.)

* * *

“ The increase of crime out here (i.e. in Kenya) is in many instances due to the film, and anything that in any way decreases the prestige of white women in a black country is an abomination which should be firmly put down.”

(Extract from letter signed C. Frere, published in *Sunday Times*, 11th May, 1930.)

A PROPOS DE NICE.

par Jean Vigo et Boris Kaufman.

A Propos de Nice, intéressante bande de huit cent mètres marque les débuts cinématographiques d'un nouveau jeune :

Jean Vigo qui a jugé utile de s'élancer sur cette voie nouvelle en compagnie d'un ami déjà expérimenté : Boris Kaufman.

Curieux film sans doute mais dont on n'appréciera peut-être pas entièrement les efforts, études et recherches, les observations qu'il a nécessités. Car il est toujours très difficile pour un étranger de saisir très justement la transcription cinématographique des us et coutumes d'une ville ou d'un pays inconnu et d'autant plus si le réalisateur ne dédaigne pas la satire et la caricature.

Jean Vigo m'a avoué avoir été fortement impressionné par *Le Chien Andalou* ; il aime, et on ne saurait lui en faire grief, les films qui, après leur projection obligent le spectateur à penser et réfléchir ; formule fort difficile en général à faire admettre au " gros public " dans l'ensemble assez paresseux et qui a pris l'habitude de deviner les faits avant même leur projection.

Après avoir situé Nice par quelques vues heureuses, les deux réalisateurs ne se sont pas attachés seulement à ses particularités locales, pittoresques certes mais sur lesquelles ils ont préféré ne pas insister ; ils ont étudié aussi l'atmosphère générale de la ville, son cosmopolitisme, ses contrastes heureux et douloureux, sa vie de fêtes et de plaisir.

Répetons le, quoique conçu sur un plan nettement établi, le film paraît parfois manquer d'enchaînement.

Il n'en demeure pas moins vrai qu'il est à étudier et qu'il faut lui reconnaître des trouvailles heureuses et des " gag " divertissants.

MAURICE M. BESSY.

Warner Brothers continue to live up to their reputation as cinema pioneers. Having started the talking picture on its way, they are now planning to make film television a practical reality. To this end they have purchased the Nakken patents for television production and projection. Incidentally, they have also acquired the Nakken method of film sound recording, with which they will replace their present Vitaphone disc method. Furthermore, as a pioneer move on the part of Hollywood to produce pictures in foreign countries, they have recently closed a deal with the German Küchenmeister and Tobis interests, and under this merger will soon start productions in Berlin, Paris and London. And already their lead has been followed by Paramount-Lasky (to be known hereafter as Paramount Publix Corporation), who are planning the building of a studio in Paris.

* * *

Universal have completed nine foreign-language versions of Paul Whiteman's *King of Jazz Revue*. These are in Swedish, German, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Hungarian, Italian, Czechoslovakian, and Japanese. Prompted by the furore created in America by *All Quiet on the Western Front*, this Universal production is also scheduled for translation into several European languages.

* * *

RKO are producing a spectacularly novel picture in the shape of a railroad story, *The Stalwart*. The scenes are being taken along a railroad from Butte, Montana, to Chicago, a distance of some fifteen hundred miles in a direct line. Alto-

gether, however, more than 25,000 miles will be covered by the travelling company of one hundred technicians and players, and virtually every type of scenery in the United States will be filmed, while incidentally portraying in all its interesting details the operation of great railway system. Revolutionary methods in both photography and sound recording will be employed, including the newly developed RKO "beam microphone," by which the sound or voice is carried to a distant microphone by means of a beam of light.

* * *

An extensive programme of establishing closer contact between the creative side of the motion-picture industry and colleges, universities, religious and welfare organizations has been inaugurated by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Dr. Clinton Wunder, with many years experience in public-relations work, has been selected to supervise this new and important undertaking.

* * *

The Hollywood custom of showing pictures before release, in Los Angeles and neighbouring-town theatres, in order to test their effect on audiences, is now being extended to include foreign-language films produced for the foreign markets. "Previews" of such pictures are given in the theatres of Los Angeles' foreign settlements and the reactions of the audiences are accepted as criteria of the films' marketability abroad.

* * *

M-G-M studio continues to lead all others in the number of actors, directors, playwrights imported directly from abroad for the making of foreign-language pictures. Already this one studio alone has a sizable foreign colony under its exclu-

CLOSE UP

sive control, with the result that its pictures for the European market are now made solely by representatives of the respective countries for which the films are intended. There is nothing of Hollywood personality about them, from scenarist to camera-man—Hollywood contributing only the money, the location and the machinery.

* * *

Universal Company are sending a company to Borneo, to film a jungle picture, *Ourang*. While it will revolve around a dramatic story, the picture is designed, also, to be of scientific interest, and to this end the cinema expedition is accompanied by Professor Bruce Harrison, of the biological department of the University of Southern California.

The heavy-artillery fire heard in *All Quiet on the Western Front* is in reality the reproduction of thunder. During one of Southern California's rare thunder storms, some enterprising "sound recordist" of the Universal Company obtained a phono-film record of the storm, and its crashes and reverberations were effectively "dubbed" into the picture as a background accompaniment to the uproar of its battle scenes.

C. H.

We have been requested to insert the following notice of an exhibition which will contain much to interest many of our readers.

EXHIBITION OF MECHANICAL AIDS TO LEARNING.

Visitors to London who take an interest in education should take care not to miss an Exhibition of a novel kind which is to

CLOSE UP

be held at the London School of Economics from September 4th-6th. At this Exhibition the British Institute of Adult Education has arranged to give the public its first opportunity in this country to see gathered together under one roof all the various mechanical devices that have been perfected in recent years for assisting education. This Exhibition is inspired primarily by the growing interest which has been taken in the possibilities of the cinema in this direction, not merely in the schoolroom and the lecture-room, but also in the general intellectual life of the community. But the films cannot be separated from the new "talkies," and these have their affinity with broadcasting, television, the gramophone, and scores of kindred devices. At this Exhibition examples of apparatus will be on show ranging from the cheapest and simplest projector up to the most elaborate talkie machine. Continuous demonstrations will be given of educational films, of broadcasting and television, etc. Finally, a comprehensive catalogue of the whole will be issued, which is likely to be of permanent value to students and teachers all over the Empire.

Nothing similar to this Exhibition has been attempted before in this country, and it will be a revelation to many to find what a large variety of mechanical inventions can now be pressed into the service of education, through the use either of the eye or of the ear, or combining both. Admission to the Exhibition will be free, and full particulars can be obtained from the British Institute of Adult Education, 39, Bedford Square, W.C.1.

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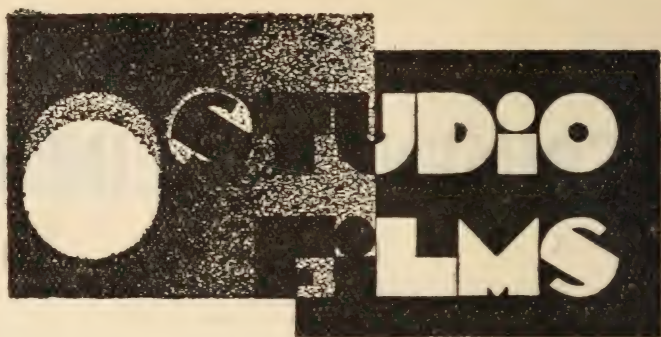
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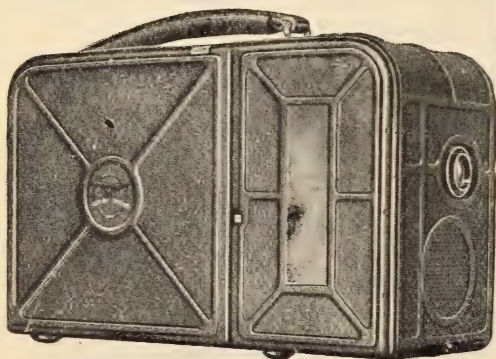
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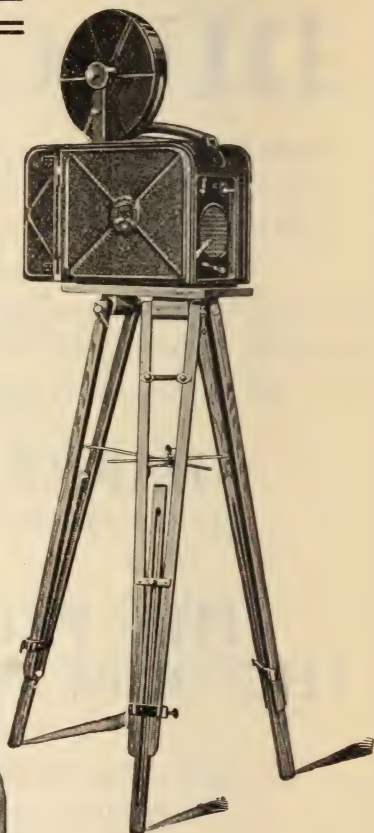
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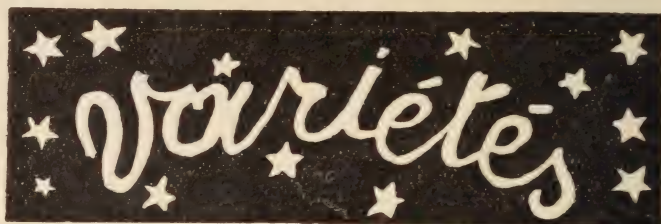
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DE L'ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN
DIRECTEUR: P.-G. VAN HECKE

Par son numéro du 1^{er} octobre 1930
"VARIÉTÉS" entrera dans sa
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ABONNEMENT D'UN AN	:	175 francs pour la Belgique ;
"	:	175 francs français pour la France ;
"	:	17 1/2 florins pour la Hollande ;
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"VARIÉTÉS" : Direction - Administration - Publicité :
BRUXELLES : 11, avenue du Congo - Téléphone 895 37.
Compte chèque postal - P.-G. van Hecke, N° 2152 . 19.

Editeur pour la France :
Librairie Gallimard, Paris

nrf

5, RUE SÉBASTIEN BOTTIN (7^e)

Dépôt pour la Hollande :
N. V. Van Ditmar, 182, Schiekade, Rotterdam

"Variétés" paraîtra le 1^{er} de chaque mois à partir du
1^{er} octobre prochain.

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Editor : K. MACPHERSON

Assistant Editor : BRYHER

Published by POOL

RIANT CHATEAU . . . TERRITET . . . SWITZERLAND

LONDON OFFICE : 26 LITCHFIELD ST., CHARING CROSS RD., W.C.2

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August 1930

AS IS

BY THE EDITOR.

The development of a required technique for sound films, so far a business of proving by negatives, has already left behind, with a gesture sufficiently over-spirited to seem unnecessary in so evidently a transient stage, the "photographed theatre," where the camera remained stationary as virtue in a Marseilles house of ill-fame. Goaded by the immediate precedent of the Russian film, the next experimentalists demanded of sound films that they should return to the visual plan of abbreviations and detail-by-cutting—an error almost as glaringly evident as the first, calling for super-human power of mental assimilation, with this dual bombardment of sensation.

The time was ripe for the development of what the silent screen itself has made but little use of or abused—the travelling shot. I mean the intelligent travelling shot that moves because impulse and action have led to curiosity to follow that movement. Such qualification is necessary in memory

of the idiotic toppling images that fill our memory, the rickety and tremulous careerings of tipsy trolleys and those wicked jerks that reinstate the image, partly lost midway.

Of the "travellings" of early history, we recall the deft and felicitous Murnauisms—parts of *Sunrise*, much of *Faust*. Mysterious, portentous and structural. *Joan*, incisive and psychically arrogant. Panning more often than travelling, however, and panning brings the mind to the incredibly perfect crowd manipulation of *Lonesome*, Pandora's run upstairs—one could go on for ever. Mamoulian then, loping round after his night-club queen, that breed of angels doing what they're doing for love—a film for lackeys, but Mamoulian's principles of organisation revealed that here was no cinematic ignoramus. Mamoulian was arriving at the starting point, with his eyes open.

The future, the very near future, has a better development. The expanding screen. For if sound is to be—you could almost say Eisenstoned—if sound is to be overtuned, modulated, controlled and recreated—the newest art—then the static screen is definitely going to hinder it.

For, as sound approaches, dies, *is*, evades, so the image must be its complement, and approach, die, *be*, evade, in the same tonic structure.

We need, to achieve something of this, a screen picture that can rush out to all corners of the auditorium, surge forward, disappear like a train, throb like a heart, coil like a snake, spray like water, rise like smoke, narrow like love, or drip purple like hope. This screen, or, more accurately, projection control, will have the twin functions of being able to expand simply, contract or bend, what you will, taking

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its image with it, and also it will be a *rolling back*, a disclosure of the image, like curtains rising on a proscenium front, revealing by degrees the whole, or chosen parts of a scene. More than this: bringing, when necessary, the entire scene into the midst of the audience. The possibilities are exciting. And the need for the moving camera may not be so paramount after all. The thought of a "mix" from a receding, vast ribbon of long-shot to an advancing close-up—if you think of it as something more vital than say a long shot of bedecked but unclad girls and a close up of some bottled blond—suggests a tension and abstraction of intense dramatic possibility. The thought of images, and succeeding images stalking silently past us in a procession of ghosts is definitely apt to make us impatient for this time to come.

Yes. For such a screen sound will have not use but need. The one thing that is awful is the thought that it may become a vehicle for those polite, not even dimly Creole "negro" rhythms of the East Side Jew composers for impeccable though androgynic rendering by Argentines and Dagoes.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

BUT SOMETHING QUITE DIFFERENT IS NEEDED

It is not generally known that Eleanora Duse, during the last years of her life, made a film. It was called *Ashes*. But is it not generally known because Duse had it destroyed; she was not satisfied with herself . . . at the end of her life, she "recognised at once that a different training, a different technique was necessary for this new art" and "I am too old for it" she said, "isn't it a pity?" two years before she died.

Duse, eight years ago, was found haunting the cinemas of Florence. If you know what those were like four years later, as I do, you will come a little nearer understanding her greatness in realising cinema itself. For Duse had been born in the life of the theatre, she had lived in it all her life, and could not keep away from it; and yet, when she was sixty-two, with years of acclamation and success behind her, she said to someone who reproached her for going to films, that they were "perhaps a genuine expression of the modern world." "If I were twenty years younger I would begin all over again on the films and I am certain that I could do a great deal on them and perhaps evolve something like a completely new form of art . . . one would have to forget the theatre

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entirely and learn how to express oneself in the language of the films, which is as yet undeveloped, but something quite different is needed (i.e., from stage technique) . . . a new and more effective kind of poetry, a new expression of the human soul . . . I am too old for it, isn't it a pity?"

I do think that ought to be known.

Duse, of course, never found the theatre she wanted. She was always searching for "new and more effective kind of poetry" in the theatre, and she lived long enough to glimpse it in cinema.

Brigitte Helm's is much the same trouble. She is born twenty years too soon and faced with her, most directors can only turn that flaming spirituality into vamp roles, robing an icicle in satin, covering a flame with unneeded tinsel.

It always happens to me that when I read of Duse, I think of Helm, and in writing of Helm, I want to write too of Duse. People will think that I am comparing them, which is absurd, the kind of thing that people would think. It simply is that if you are talking of the South Pole to someone, you presume some knowledge of the North Pole, though the two are quite different. There are, for instance, no bears in the Antarctic, far fewer flowers and the Aurora Borealis is much poorer; on the other hand there are more and greater icebergs. They are "poles apart," but it is what lies between that makes simultaneous consideration possible, and I feel that there was Duse, whom I did just see, and here is Brigitte Helm, and everything else lies between. But that of course does not bring them together. An Arctic bird could not live in the South Pole.

But I am constantly surprised at how old-fashioned nearly

everything that happens, is . . . the way people live and their love-affairs, flying the Atlantic, Mickey now he fails to develop, Cochran revues, the use of radio, the fact that women have not evolved either a useful or a beautiful costume, our treatment of such things as gases and "natives," the things we talk about and, can I believe my ears, the things we don't. And when I look back, there was Duse, accepting the cinema and realising it, and I look round again and find Helm, who does to me typify a lot that we call "modern." The things which, the more one grows accustomed to being alive, one finds one can use . . . zip-fasteners, the rock paintings at Makumbi, Heinrich Mann's *Berlin*, the outside of Selfridges, the colours and materials of the Central London railway, and the fact that a sunbeam could give a 120 m.p.h. aeroplane a start of five million miles in a five million and one mile race and win . . . with all that Brigitte Helm fits in.

So when she arrived at Wembley, to do interiors on the four-tongued *City of Song*, I went down to see her. It happened that just before, some friends of mine were reading Ibsen, and as I had seen *The Lady from the Sea* acted by Duse, I was reading her life by Rheinhardt (Berlin, 1928, Secker, London, 1930, 16s.) and perhaps because of association through Werner Krauss in *The Wild Duck*, though I think because I always, Duse apart, thought so, I was thinking of Helm in such plays as *Rosmersholm* and *The Doll's House*. Anyway, you see I was in a certain amount of muddle which Helm only increased by making it seem quite natural.

She has a gift for making things seem that. It seems quite

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natural to be sitting talking to her, although the prospect of meeting the trailing turbaned creature of German films with the sidelong glance is unnerving. It seems quite natural at the time to find that she is not this at all, though you only think that after. She is not in the least a star and not in the least indifferent. Her eyes are so blue and her skin so Germanic-gold that the steel-and-silver Brigitte Helm of the screen seems (what it is) a creation of her mind. Off the screen, even in make up and a long pale blue dress, she and her screen-self seem complementary but detached. What they call bi-polarity, I believe. But you see that the screen Helm is the clothing devised by the mind for her actual self, which is so friendly and radiant and lights up so gently when you mention Pabst, say you know Berlin or tell her she will soon see *Anna Christie*.

It is absurd to mitigate Helm's magnetism because they often put her in mediocre films. We are told she cannot be as good as we think she is, it is merely personality shining in a desert. But personality could not alone, at twenty-two have made Helm the most important actress in the European cinema, playing with equal insight young wives, girls and mature women, crooks, miller's daughters, hostesses and expensive prostitutes generally. Look at other people in mediocre films and see how mediocre they are. Think of Dita Parlo's failure to be anything but superficial in *Heimkehr*, think of how much more Helm did in *The Wonderful Lie* than Parlo again in *Hungarian Rhapsody*, and, classic instance, think of Louise Brooks—Lulu. In a good film too, well a goodish one, think how much better even than Marlene Dietrich Helm would have been in all that is important. The

trouble is that Helm in a bad film makes it seem much better. She gives it a vitality on a real, psychic plane. She brings motives and moods into play that never are brought into play except by her, though we know them in our daily lives, and she can give them with a sharpness which loses no delicacy and a fulness which is never broad. She makes a living woman in a film where no woman could live, and so, brought up on the slick interpretations, which give us no women at all, of Norma Shearer, Ruth Chatterton, Mary Brian and the rest who are so pleasant in their way, we rather tend to say that Helm is "exotic." Actually, she becomes only exotic when she has a bad director, and her cool ardour and sort of mystical matter-of-factness are diverted into vamp roles.

Duse, of course, acted in mediocre plays. Sardou, Dumas. She did Shakespeare, Ibsen, Goldoni too, but *Heimat* and *La Dame Aux Camélias*, plays like that, were her repertory. Once again, those plays acted by ordinary players show Duse's greatness. I only once saw Duse, once only, in only one play, but the extraordinary thing is that having seen that, I have a good knowledge of what she would have been like in those other plays which I have seen actresses make nothing of. And why did she go on appearing in these plays? Rheinhardt's book says "Because she felt that their conventional construction left the character parts undeveloped; they provided merely a framework in which she had room to create her own conception . . . acting was the creative expression of an inner discord which might have become pathological but for her gifts, a projection of split in the personality, a solution for her own problems." And Paul Schlenther wrote of her creations "When one sees an actress like Duse taking

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all the crudeness out of those crude and mediocre plays one is compelled to admit that acting can be completely emancipated from poetry and to swear that it is a flow of changing plastic effects more akin to sculpture." Words which rather seem to fit what Helm does in the train sequence in *Alraune* and in *Abwege (The Crisis)* and in *The Wonderful Lie*.

Perhaps one of the reasons why I keep referring to Duse in what should be an interview with Brigitte Helm is that most of the things which were said of Duse's work seem as you see to apply to Helm. That uncanny quality which one can find no name for, merely say she is tense and true and psychic . . . one finds in a book on Duse that everyone felt in her "something of the elemental and indefinable," and that is what you want for Helm's uncanny power.

That power is due to her being behind her parts. The ice-flaming presence we see on the screen flames, it seems to me, with mind. There is the glittering scythe and behind it the swing of the scythe. That is Helm, acting. Mind-acting. She makes herself a vehicle for it, as Duse felt herself a vehicle for a power greater than herself. They say that when, in the first act of *La Dame aux Camélias*, the dance is broken by a cough, "Duse merely stopped and looked nervous." That is a remarkable thing to do. I think only Brigitte Helm on the screen could do it. She is always at her best when she stops and looks nervous; that is to say, when her actual person stops and she is a vehicle for flowing mind. You are never taken in by the fact that Helm plays vamps so well, are you?; so much the better than Garbo for instance? She says "I will play a vamp, of course, but she must have something here"—and she hits neither heart nor head, but her chest,

meaning drive and the need to get something out. It seems she instinctively feels that crooks have their expression twisted, have the wrong outlet, and wants to know why that is so . . . because, like any creative worker, she wants to free herself.

If you grant mind-acting, you will see that to the mind the actual physical side seems so strident and unimportant in many ways that the only way of stressing its unimportance is to make it (almost) burlesque. I mean that to anyone creating psychically the material symbols with which they create, the actual world with which they must symbolise the real inner world, seem so crude, highly-coloured and over-solid because they cannot be ethereal that to stress the solidity stresses also the ethereality. Helm could not be such a good vamp were that all she were at. That is a well-known fact, exemplified by "I could not love thee dear so much" etc., and by the pure Duse being the only person who dared put on plays that were thought highly immoral, such as Renan's *L'Abbesse de Jouarre*. To me, Brigitte Helm stands for an entirely peculiar type of acting which is not in the least exotic, but merely rare. It is simply that she goes further and takes things on to a higher plane. The things she is called on to do in her parts she does a little more sharply, she sees a little more clearly; and when she is to be exotic, she carries exoticism a little further, because she is behind it and that is her mind's comment on it. But in simple parts or sophisticated parts, you can always find what she is doing, if you look, what she is searching for in the parts, the solution she is trying to achieve as she develops, and that "split in personality" was so marked when I met her at Wembley that when I came on

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the phrase in the book, I got muddled with Duse, and have written no interview at all.

But does that matter? I can tell you that she hated *The Yacht of the Seven Sins*; that she says everything is due to one's director, it is awful to work with a director who makes one do stupid things as some of them do; that she speaks two languages in *City of Song*, her first talkie, but plans to add French and English to these in her next film, to be made in Germany with Fritz Kortner. Then she plans to go on the stage, because she has been working since she was sixteen and has never had to speak, and she feels the stage will give her voice-poise. She would like to go to Hollywood for no more than two films. She would learn a lot in Hollywood *if* she came back in time; and she thinks it a pity to work too long for one firm, because they get fixed in their ideas about you. And she wants a new type of part (in my opinion she needs a new kind of cinema, for the cinema which she represents, the psychological cinema, has not come into its own or even been properly born yet. Infant mortality in film-psychology is high). But what is all that compared to the fact that meeting her one knows she can act Ibsen and that the real part for her is neither a *Manolescu* crook, nor a Grune miller's daughter, but a combination of both. Real simplicity, which is sophistication achieved. And compared to the fact that eight years ago an elderly actress was complaining that she was twenty years too old and that she would like to begin all over again on the movies, the only thing in acting that isn't old-fashioned between her and Brigitte Helm, now that the cinema talks, going to the theatre to learn how to talk. I mean, do you see what I mean?

ROBERT HERRING.

DIRTY WORK

So we are exposed. The sleuths of the Tory Central Office after months of snooping around, have blown the whole dirty conspiracy sky high. Their fearless bloodhounds, noses to the ground, have unearthed the dastardly plot to undermine the very foundations of civilisation. The universe totters. The millions gasp with wonder and lift their voices to High Heaven in thankful praise for their deliverance.

But let us get to our muttons. The sleuths have discovered that Russian films are being shown in England. And shown publicly, too. In fact, the REPORT containing the exposure emphasises by italics that one London cinema ran *The End of St. Petersburg* five times daily. Just think of it. By paying sixpence you could see "St. Petersburg" continuously from 1 p.m. to 11 p.m. Horrible!

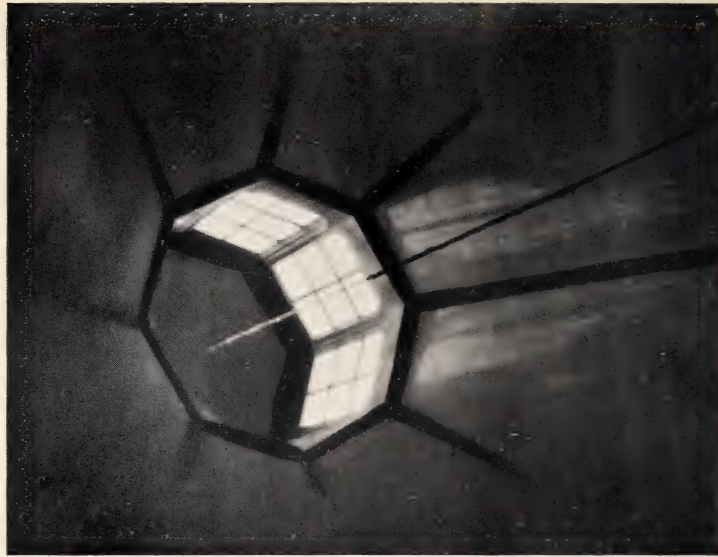
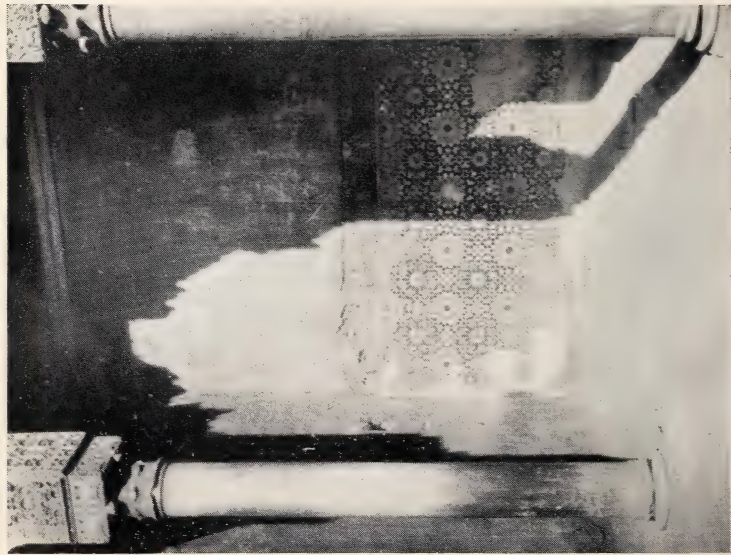
And just think of the inflammable propaganda of some of these Russian films. Among others mentioned in the REPORT as guaranteed to pollute the minds of the great British public are *The Postmaster*, *The Station Inspector*, *The Marriage of the Bear*, and *Polikushka*. Again we say, Horrible.

The real trouble seems to be the distressing habit of these Russians for making films that cause people to think. The

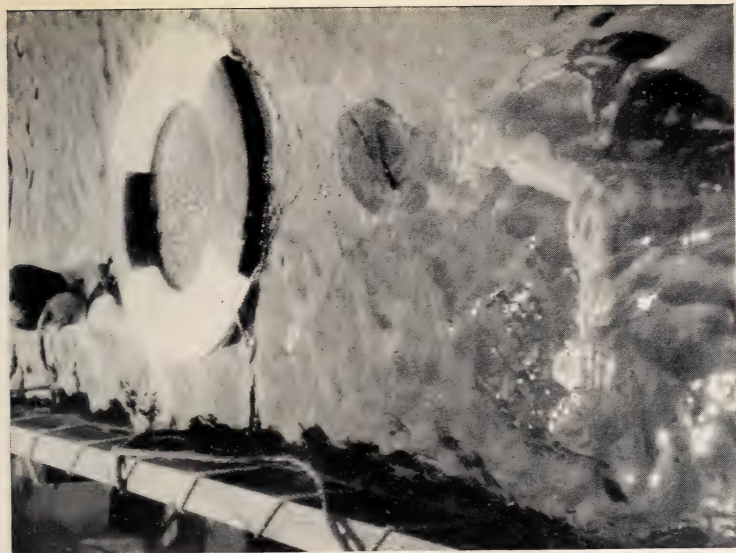


From *Springtime at the Zoo*, one of the *Secrets of Nature* series edited by Mary Field for British Instructional. It is difficult to decide whether the preoccupation of the chimps with their spring modes in headgear is more or less piquant than Bruin's game of solitaire! In any event, all three are delicious and companionable people.





We have received these fine studies from Hans Casparius who has been making a photographic and film expedition by sea to Africa. Readers will recall photos previously printed in *Close-Up*.



Further stills from the Casparius collection. These are entitled respectively *Wash of the Sea* and *Under Water*.
 Mr. Casparius does not state if he has yet mounted his film.



From *Romance Sentimentale*, a short sound film made by Eisenstein and Alexandroff during their recent stay in Paris.





From *Mor-Vran*, the new film by J. Epstein which has also the sea and the shore woven in its theme as had *Finis Terrae*.



The Cemetery of Sein, also from *Mor-Vran*.



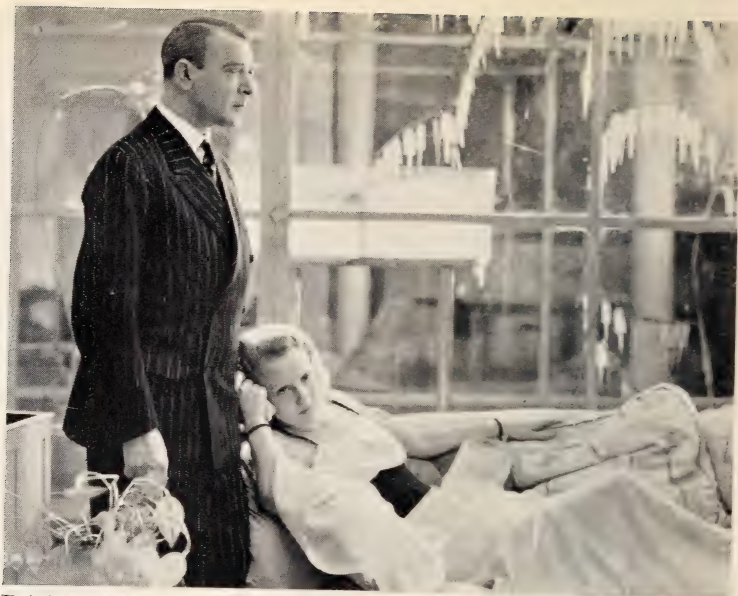
Jacques Cartier in his Voodoo dance. From *The King of Jazz*. This dance was signalled by Robert Herring as the "high-spot" of the film. It was filmed in blue. The dance is performed on an immense drum.



From the Canadian sequence of *One Family*, "Britain's answer to Soviet Propaganda."



One Family. Directed by Walter Creighton for British Instructional Films. There is vast scope for the subject, but perhaps the title is hardly felicitous, seeing that families are apt to quarrel so much more readily than friends !



Brigitte Helm and Georg Alexander in a scene from *City of Song*, an Associated Sound Film Industries film now being made at Wembley, in English, German, French, Italian, as well as in silent version.



A view of the actual shooting of a scene from *City of Song*. Camera and "mike" (suspended from horizontal wooden arm) placed on a wheeled truck and moved through a room of people, making picture and recording conversation as they go. Director : Carmine Gallone, Art-Direction : Oscar Wemdorff (*Nibelungen*), Sound-Direction : Leo Mittler.

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REPORT quotes Eisenstein in *Close Up* (" a monthly film review ") as saying that the Soviet films are " a powerful weapon for the propagation of ideas." And, as we all know the last thing a film should do is to make people think. All the most " successful " box office films are those without any ideas at all, and it is only right that the Russians should be told off for busting such time honoured and valuable traditions.

Of course, you could scarcely expect the sleuths to be over accurate. *Turksib* was apparently made by a man called Torin, of whom we have never heard. *C.B.D.* had " panics and riots in every corner," (this is too rich !). *Potemkin*, according to the REPORT was shown by the Film Society at the New Gallery when as everybody knows it was the Tivoli. We learn that the Workers' Film Society exhibited *Men of the Woods* in May 1928, whereas this film did not arrive in London until months after.

I merely mention these little points in case the REPORT is given a second edition. Even our comic literature should be accurate.

Who is behind this plot? Who are the enemies within the gate? Well, according to the REPORT, the villains of the piece are :

The Film Society.

The London Workers' Film Society.

The Atlas Film Co.

Close Up (" A Film Magazine ").

The Komintern.

A five-headed monster.

But the activities of the sleuths are not confined to ferret-

ing out Russian films in England. Edgar Wallace must turn green with envy when he contemplates the international ramifications of the bloodhounds, for they have discovered that Ivor Montagu is in America, or about to go to America (they are not quite sure which).

A few weeks ago Wardour Street was agog with excitement. Rumours were thicker than cans of film. All work was suspended. First came the news that Ivor Montagu *had* been arrested in Hollywood. Then, Ivor Montagu *was* going to be arrested *when* he arrived in Hollywood. Then, Ivor Montagu *would* be arrested when he stepped off the boat at New York.

Wardour Street went back to work.

Meanwhile Russian films continue to be shown in British cinemas, and audiences seem to like them.

R. BOND.

A NEW BELGIAN FILM

Histoire de Détective: by Charles Dekeukeleire.

I must admit a special fondness for any film conceived and realised by a Belgian.

The isolated efforts of young cinematographers full of faith in their art and of sturdy courage, have made me feel that the criticism with which their work has been received is not infrequently either harsh or unjust, for the reason that the

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critics, misinterpreting their functions, allow themselves to be guided by considerations of sentiment or of publicity.

A Belgian work deserves to be studied with as much impartiality and penetration as no matter what foreign masterpiece and particularly is it necessary to take into consideration the modest technical and pecuniary resources at the command of the few Belgian producers.

In the domain of intelligence and sensibility I consider my young compatriot Charles Dekeukeleire the best of those Belgians who have not so far experienced the attraction of foreign studios, who work at home and combine, when producing their films, all the functions that elsewhere are distributed amongst an heirarchy of technicians and functionaries.

Dekeukeleire is a self-made man of the cinema; slowly, laboriously, he has acquired the solid experience that to-day qualifies him to give us a complete film of a new cinematic form and equilibrium, far surpassing his two early efforts *Combat de Boxe* and *Impatience*, short-length films one of which was a study of visual rhythm and the other an essay in technique.

In regard to his *Histoire de Détective* I dare to be both hopeful and enthusiastic. Hopeful as to the form, which is new and conceived in a way that will at first sight appear absurd to all those not well-versed in cinematics, but that is to my mind the beginning of a new manner. The author's great merit is his break with a tradition he finds out-moded and his discovery of a new method of expression. I am enthusiastic with regard to certain fragments of this film wherein are mingled the freshness of a sentimental naïvety and a

rhythmic treatment of the image that expresses the author's temperament in a vigorous, sane, constructive manner.

It is for this reason that I find specially pleasing the less perfect passages of the film, those in which the image is too sharply accentuated, to the detriment of poetry, and the handling of certain images which stand out with an astonishing photographic precision, luminously spiritual: as for example the scene of apples in movement and of melting iron.

I have said that Dekeukeleire represents a new visual expressiveness. I would call it "subjective dynamism." Cinematography is the art of capturing the synthesis of movement, but it is not sufficient to place oneself outside the field of action and register on the film the moving elements of reality. This is the method of current productions, the cameraman being satisfied with merely recording life as it passes, himself remaining either motionless or at any rate indifferent to the manifestations he is witnessing. He must give his lens, the eye of the camera, both intelligence and movement.

The registering apparatus itself becomes a living organ, moving and reacting psychologically. For the spectacle of a world which hitherto was nothing but an animated photograph, dependent for its interest upon form and the movement of figures, is substituted the impression received by the cameraman himself: the result being achieved by the synthesis of two distinct movements, the one that of his own interior life and the other that of external life, modified, designed, transformed in the direction of his psychic impression of it.

This film will be contested because it reverses the normal

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attitude of the spectator. He may no longer be an indifferent observer, sharing or not sharing the proffered joys and sorrows. He is, as it were, flung violently into the *mêlée*. His eye is held by the screen and he is left unsupported by the artificial logic that has been established for everyday use and for the purpose of facilitating understanding and establishing pleasure. There are no love-scenes to be observed with the tranquillity of one accustomed to examine detail through opera-glasses. The elements that make for rational thought are sown within the whirlwind of sentiments and disordered ideas. And these images, rising from the subconscious, succeed each other in a disorder that is often much more significant than are the most logically-ordered intellectual processes.

Nothing is more delicate than this essentially mobile way of registering facts that are themselves subject to movement, and particularly in this film, subjective from beginning to end where the mobility of the apparatus is the result of a psychological state of impatience, the febrile inquietude of a passionate search for the author's own personality.

The weak point in the work is the use of an insufficient means for the realisation of a complete, too exclusive idea. The extreme rapidity of the images caught in rhythm with the author's movement demands from the apparatus a technical virtuosity that science has not so far achieved. Of this the author is aware, for one of the numerous sub-titles, all, by the way, extremely well drawn up, begs the spectator to excuse the momentary imperfection of the image at the instant when the leading character finds himself caught in the movement of a crowd.

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Our compatriot has been well-advised in selecting an extremely simple scenario. Such a choice is essential to the success of a film of this kind.

In general an uniform subjectivity is, I think, successfully to be presented only in short reels, in sketches. A complete work calls for moments of arrest, breathing-spaces during which the spectator may recover himself. Continuous effort of eye and mind is fatiguing. In representation, as in thought, a certain quietude is essential.

Histoire de Détective is conceived in a fever of enthusiasm and sincerity sometimes usurping the place of mastery and control.

Dekeukeleire has nevertheless demonstrated that research, intelligent curiosity, ensures not a mere *succès d'estime* but the certainty of having gloriously contributed to the best development and to the perfection of the art of cinematography.

ANDRE CAUVIN.

WESTFRONT 1918

In the course of another generation, when the history of the cinema comes to be written, it is probable that *Westfront 1918*, directed by Pabst, will occupy the same position with regard to the sound film that *Potemkin* occupies in relationship to

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the silent picture. It is not that the basic idea of *Westfront* is brought out with the clarity it might have had in a Russian picture, nor even that it is as full of subtleties and overtones as Pabst's earlier silent work, but every moment of this film is experimental, creative experiment with a new medium, sound as connected with visual motion.

It seems so simple now that it is before us; as if we could not have lived these last twenty cinematic years without these principles being applied. Just as it is now impossible to conceive of life without the unconscious. Others no doubt will take this idea or that, enlarge, improve, so that in two or three years time the *avant garde* will have other idols. But it should be recorded that real creation with sound and movement began with *Westfront 1918* and history must owe something always to this film, and to its use of visual image with auditory sensation.

Our eyes are trained to see, but our ears are not yet trained to hear, and neither eyes nor ears know enough as yet to balance impressions properly together. *Westfront* shows us the way to a further and deeper artistic appreciation.

For curiously enough, it is possible to deepen consciousness through film more than through other arts; perhaps through a process of concentration. And from *Westfront* is to be seen not a war film in sound so much as the possibility of developing a new sense, a balance of ear, eye and brain with all its exciting problems.

Certainly no other director has achieved the same results with sound to date, that Pabst has created in this film.

What has he made of sound? It is impossible to be precise, I could see the film only once, and realised after the first

five minutes that if I were to report the film for *Close Up*, I must keep my mind on the purely technical aspects of the picture. But the intensity of the images was so great that I kept being swept from my attempted abstraction into the film itself. The chief points noted however were the following.

Very little use of dialogue. (The only moment I desired silence was at one of the few places where it was used.) Much use of incidental sound. Travelling shots in place of close ups. The sensation of movement. For *Westfront* moves from beginning to end. Some films are constructed from pauses. And sound films, from being at the beginning a series of photographs changed as slowly as slides, even now take what opportunity they may to minimise movement. But in *Westfront* there was no static moment; it moved more swiftly than any film I have seen, except for some sequences in the work of Eisenstein.

I was not particularly disposed to like *Westfront* before seeing it. First of all I must have read more than a dozen German war books and of them all I liked least *Vier aus der Infanterie*, the book by Johannsen upon which the scenario is founded. I should have liked myself to have seen Glaeser's *Jahrgang 1902* filmed. (Readers must not judge this book by the English translation in which whole sections are omitted). It has always seemed to me that Glaeser described the outbreak of war, and gave an impression of its needless tragedy, as no other book in modern war literature has rendered it. Whereas I found personally that *Vier aus der Infanterie* seemed non constructive and not sensible enough of the causes which led to war. Then also I felt doubtful

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about Pabst's ability to cope with great mass effects. His silent work has been best in small rooms and tense repressive atmospheres. And for mass effect, Russia has set a standard very difficult to equal.

The film began with soldiers resting behind the lines. With fragments of talk, teasing of a French girl (played by Jackie Monnier) and with the "four." The student, the officer, Karl, (G. Diessl) the intelligent worker from the towns, and the big good-tempered peasant, (F. Campers). At first I could not distinguish the words at all; a common experience with talkies in a foreign language, then words began to be distinct here and there. Soldiers fetched water, they read, they teased the girl, and suddenly she replied in French, every syllable audible. And I began to be excited at this blending of languages, excited as one only can be doing something desired but not before experienced, as one is in flying, or when drift ice breaks for the first time slowly away from the horizon. For what opportunities of deepening consciousness there are in this new use of sound, this mingling of speech that may be listened to without obligation to understand or to reply, that may be experimented with or played with, according to desire. Just for that moment one forgot *Westfront* and saw only misunderstandings averted, that so often lead to war, by the increased knowledge of other languages the talking film might bring.

Two soldiers fight. Another raises his hand to count one man out, and at the precise moment the arm falls, gunfire bursts the ears.

People race for the cellar down stairs and half broken steps. As they descend, the sound grows fainter. The student and

the girl love, drawn together by danger, but the alarm sounds and the soldiers tramp up into increasing sound and away towards trenches. Words are reduced to a minimum; it is incidental noise, scrape of boots on stone, a sudden word, a door, the never ceasing hurricane of the artillery. Effective turmoil with long travelling shots so full of movement that one can think only of a camera automatically recording riot or meeting, for a newsreel. Trenches, mud, hurried orders. *Sound only with a blank screen.* Men fling themselves on wooden bunks. Equipment bumps against planks. A sudden order is shouted against incidental noise. Men race out again into mud. Explosions punctuate whistling shells. And helplessly against it from time to time, harsh hardly audible words.

The telephone lines are down. A dog trots off, with a message strapped to his collar. The peasant and another soldier are trapped through the roof of a dug-out collapsing on them. Others work feverishly to dig them out. The peasant holds up the roof on his helmet till the metal of it is forced out of shape through the weight. Hands drag him out as another shell falling beside him buries his companion beyond hope of rescue.

The officer calls for a volunteer to go back with a message, and remembering the girl, the student comes forward. Here again there are no falsely heroic passages but the arrival of the student behind the lines is shown, out of breath, terrified, deafened. The officer's orderly smuggles out a plate of food, reward of all danger. He shares it with the still breathless student, who then slips off to risk, though it be counted desertion, a night with the girl.

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And next morning there is almost silence and he walks back over the ground where he had crouched and run between shell holes, to find his companions.

Other sequences follow; there is a performance behind the lines remarkable for the effect of movement in long shot. The camera sweeps from the back of the room to the front. A man leaves in the far corner and it is more important than the nearer faces. And the effect of these crowded shots, is threatening and unquiet.

Karl goes on leave and the sound moderates. New drafts march by and women wait in food queues. A huge policeman is in charge. And here occurs one of the finest moments of the film. Karl's mother sees him go up the distant stairs towards his flat. She is mid-way in the queue, dare she leave and lose her place? She explains and the policeman, in perfect *silence*, shrugs his shoulders. No words, no sound, only the utter non-reason and annihilation of war in one gesture.

Karl finds his key, strange relic of peace time among military tools, unlocks the door and finds his wife in bed with another man. Here for a moment only one would have preferred silence, for the first words he screams become theatre. But afterwards when he is silent again, looking at the rifle he has been taught to use, and then to the wife and the strange man beside her, it is cinema. On the table is a calling up notice. "You, also," Karl says and lets the stranger go. The mother comes, the wife cries, he spreads the table with food he has brought back and because they are hungry, they eat it, but he will not yield to entreaty or explanation. "You do not understand," the wife says, and "you do not

understand " he thinks. The days go by. He starts down the stairs back to the trenches. The wife cries and waits. Neither has understood the other. Instead of words there is only the sound of nailed boots on the stone steps, hurrying at first, pausing mid-way, almost stopping, then going on steadily again because he is going back to his friends, to the peasant whom he meets and to the student who at that very moment has been choked by a Senegalese soldier and flung back into a hole full of black muddy water. (This scene of the student choking out " *muller* " as he drowns, has since been cut by special request of the authorities. It is alright to go to war but not moral to show it as it is, afterwards.)

Men wait coldly in trenches. They listen. At the moment silence is most desired, an entrenching tool scrapes against stone. There is mud everywhere and holes. One hand sticks up from a pool of slime. Suddenly they hear voices, and the voices speak in *French*. Attack and explosion and shells bursting mingle with shots of men rushing along the winding trenches. The officer lifts himself alive from a pile of corpses and goes suddenly and horribly, mad. He is led away to a temporary hospital, screaming, and throughout the final scene his monotonous screams act on the atmosphere of terror like the gunfire on the conversation of the earlier opening scenes. The peasant lies and suffers with his stomach shot away. Doctors speak. The officer screams. A man discovers he is blinded. The officer screams. Anæsthetics give out. A soldier starts up to find his legs are gone. Karl remembers his wife. The officer screams. There is still the far off sound of gunfire. The officer screams. There is no reason anywhere. "We are all guilty, all of us,"

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Karl says, and the film fades out on the hospital line of moaning figures lying upon straw.

It is reported that twenty people fainted at the Berlin opening and that one or two who objected politically, were shouted down by men who had themselves been through the war. Presumably it will not be shown in its entirety in England. Men may go to war and children starve but "undue cruelty" says the Censor, "must not be shown in films for public exhibition." War must be thought of in terms of flags and new uniforms and not in terms of insane men and shot bellies.

Neither sound experimentation nor the movement of film can be conveyed in words. *Close Up* readers who can get abroad should make every effort possible to see *Westfront*. It is being shown generally throughout Germany and Switzerland. No doubt a version will be shown in England but we fear alas, that it may be cut. Otherwise it would be well if readers would remember, before acclaiming some use of sound as new, that it may have been used in this film, made and shown in Germany in the early part of 1930.

BRYHER.

“PLAYING WITH SOUND”

My note on the olfactory cinema in the June, 1930, number, was preceded, in order of publication, by its footnote quoting Fairbanks on the same theme.* *Cinema Unity II*,† written as it was more than a year ago, is an early consideration of the non-synchronous sound-sight film, the idea of which has been seized upon at this late day, but only as a statement, by several other writers. The composition of this non-synchronisation has been accurately termed and described by Eisenstein as “disproportion.” This includes not only the separation of lip-movements and speech, but utterances—speech-as-utterance — by land-scapes. Disproportion as against naturalism.

* The Deharme article in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* appeared in the issue of March 1st, 1928. The apostrophe was dropped before 28. My article in the *Musical Quarterly* was published April, 1929, although written in 1927, just when sound first screeched. Between the writing of *Cinema Unity II* and its publication I saw *The Taming of the Shrew*. The “blank verse, recitative film, in which the verbal essence is extracted and refined to meet with the image projected,” still awaits its artist. Barrymore is to do *Hamlet*. Will it be as funny as his *Don Juan*, the first synchronized, music only, feature, which I have just seen for the first time. The audience enjoyed its unintentional absurdity. Barrymore should remain Jack, and forego John. (I speak of this more anon.)

† *Close Up*, June, 1930.

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The Soviet technique of montage makes possible this structural unity. Sound will be mounted into the visual-motor composition, compounding it, "on the table." The idea of sound-montage has been previously called impracticable by typical studio-practicians. But Alexandroff, Eisenstein's co-director, whom I have just seen off westward, has told me he has mounted sound in his brief experiment, *A Sentimental Romance*, which he made in Paris and sold to Paramount-Publix. He has done in this film a number of things I have thought basic in "playing with sound," such as : running the sound-track backwards, inscribing or designing the sound (sound is after all only inscription). He cut the sound inscription. By such method one may retard or accelerate sound movement. Let us say a note is banged on the piano, impressed on the negative. Immediate cutting—and there are a variety of ways—will change the character of the sound and give it an absoluteness. That is to say, it will not be associated with the instrument from which it will have emanated. One may record a jazz-band and then play around with the sounds as impressed, and get thereby any number of possible arrangements. The same can be achieved with speech : it may be clipped, stretched, broken into stutters, made to lisp, joined with all sorts of sound combinations either in discriminate mélange or in alternating, repeating motifs.

Alexandroff, so he told me, has played with the designs of sound by inscribing it directly on the negative and allowing light to make the final registration. Direct inscription of visual motifs on the negative has been attempted. And direct inscription of sound is more feasible, since in the visual movie

human images are wanted, whereas in sound expressive utterances, which can be fabricated, are ultimately desirable. By studying the inscriptions closely one may come to an exact knowledge of these inscriptions and read them as easily as one reads musical notes for sound. The inscription of speech and that of sound differ only in the composition of the intervals and a close student will come to recognise the peculiarities of the different impressions. Actually sound will be created without being uttered!

The problem of fading out sound can be met by cutting. This is anticipated in a visual fade-out used in the Soviet film, *A Fragment of an Empire* (*Stump of an Empire*), where, instead of the usual fade-out in a *slope* of deepening density, the fade-out is one of *steps* of successively darker tones. Alexandroff, instead of recording the *slope* up to and down from highest pitch of a siren's whistle, cut the sound into ascending and descending steps, a much more exciting method. Similarly sounds may be made to fade in and fade out.

Cataloguing and indexing of sounds is a step toward conventionalisation. I recall speaking with Charles Lapworth, then production manager for *Société Générale des Films*, on that subject more than a year and a half ago. Lapworth spoke of the simple multiplication of the inscription to get degrees of volume. A sound might be catalogued Mob Scene I, Index 3. By multiplication one may be able to achieve the volume of a mob of 10 to a mob of 10,000, and with no risk as to outcome.

The companies are cataloguing sounds. First National has such a library of several thousand records and hundreds

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of reels of sound on film. Col. N. H. Slaughter is in charge of the department. Actually there are very few imitations of real sounds in the films. Natural sounds are fabricated. Companies on location in the mountains have tried to capture thunder but have failed, because it is difficult, impossible indeed, to determine the distance of the thunder-clap, in order to adjust the micro. Sounds difficult to record, when once ensnared, are made permanent in the library. Bernard Brown finally got the hum of a beehive and it is in the First National collection. But why the effort, when a sneeze in the micro simulates thunder?

H. A. POTAMKIN.

MOVIE: NEW YORK NOTES

Paramount financed the Byrd exploration into the South Polar region, and sent along two "Ace cameramen," van der Veer and Rucker. The picture has just been released. *With Byrd at the South Pole* shows alert camerawork of two good artisans, not extremely brilliant. The cameramen were evidently directors too, for much of the documentation seems enacted, rather than recorded. The men of the party played—there had to be "humorous touches" so the young lady reviewers of the daily press (how they multiply!) could applaud. Close-ups of seals are interesting, and the bobbing

up and down of the whales is exciting—more so than the trip to the Pole, but, despite the obvious improvement in the mechanisms of cinema which enabled better pictures, the animal records are no better than those made by Ponting on the ill-fated Scott expedition more than two decades previously. Ponting had the disadvantages of his period, including the stolidity of “stills”; and the relative security of the two trips was certainly to the advantage of the Byrd expedition. Somehow the picture of the Scott expedition, which I have seen simultaneous with that of the Byrd, was more ominous, perhaps for apperceptive reasons: the knowledge of the outcome of the one and the other. But there is something in the Byrd picture that belies heroism, risk—a part of the exploration—and that something is composed of faults typical of the American attitude: the forcing of the heroism; the horseplay; the lack of sobriety in the captions; the smug camerawork—alert in the usual way and artisan-like though it was; the smartaleck vocal commentary at the latter part of the film by the “lightning announcer” of the radio, Floyd Gibbons. Gibbons weighted the excitement of the flight over the base of the earth with his hackneyed and ill-tutored exclamations, his rasping voice and his weakness for threadbare similes. The editing by Emmanuel Cohen, trained in the uninspired tradition of newsreel editing, showed neither grace in the titling nor a feeling for composition in the mounting. I do not see why (apart from publicity scoop reasons) Paramount had to go to the Pole to make this film. A much better Polar film, based on the facts of Polar discovery, could have been made in Canada or Alaska; though, of course, here again, the chance of an epic, when

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one recalls other American "epics"—*The Covered Wagon* and *The Trail of '98*—must be discounted.

It seems gratuitous to say, after my tirade, that *With Byrd at the South Pole* is not without interest, and merit, but an interest not special—from the viewpoint of execution—and a merit academic.

Another "epic," made independently by Burden-Chanler, directed by Carver, assisted by several others, including an "animal authority," has been a hit at the Criterion on Broadway, where Paramount has put it before the eyes of a gullible public. It attests, however, to the appeal of the silent picture and the weak-kneed primitive. Even the critics found it meritorious. *The Silent Enemy* was praised by the astute Alexander Bakshy of *The Nation* (New York) and Mr. Bruce Bliven, who, possessing the qualifications of sentimentality, nostalgia for lost paradise and a naïve hate for machines—which is enough reason for him to disparage the Soviet films—and a total ignorance of the medium of the cinema, has become film-critic for *The New Republic*.

Actually, *The Silent Enemy* is a complete failure. Epic is epic treatment. The stuff of the Red Man fighting hunger and the elements is not novel. Treatment, organisation, pictorial tones for moods, these determine the novelty, the connotation, of the film. There is not the least indication of "montage-feeling" here. The advertised caribou, much applauded by the expectant but prim audience, is dull enough to have been "shot" in the safe corral of a stockyard. Formula scenes are there. I could have foretold the trek at long distance of the sleds and marchers—just as an identical "shot" appeared in the Byrd film. And I could have fore-

told the applause in the two instances—applause from habit and reminiscence.

The release of satiation, after the victorious caribou hunt (how little of the zeal of victory is in this hunt!), not being properly anticipated by a rightly stressed and pictorially-toned agony of starvation, is a weak and trite "discharge." The fight between the mountain-lion and the bear contains only the minimum of fascination present in the fact itself. The camera did nothing, the feeling for montage being nil. The performance of the natives was literal—since the director possessed no instinct for "overtone." The folded arm self-sacrifice may be a fact, but a fact, presented in the fashion of the 1914 "injun" film, is less than a fact, it becomes a lie. The vocal introduction of the chief—banal and sycophantic—anticipated this unleavened structure, and the reduction of a tale of primitive struggles, man v. nature, to a pernicious white man's bourgeois acceptance, the trivia of personal enmity and "the eternal triangle." It is just the sort of film to be expected of the oppressed man's "patrons." Perspicacious sympathy was not in their philosophy, and in technology they were novices with talent. The art of the cinema is technology informed by philosophy, hence. . . . Here an epic to be enacted that was not!

I had just published an essay on Motion Picture Comedy in *The New World Monthly* (New York) in which I referred to a delectable memory of John Barrymore in *The Man from Mexico*, made about 15 years ago. Almost simultaneous with the appearance of my essay came the announcement that Warner Brothers had produced F. Anstey's *The Man from Blankley's*. The film is far from my anticipations. Anstey's

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drolleries are there in the lines, but the film is inactive, and the High (Hat) Comedy depends on the activity of comedy, less boisterous than that of "churlish comedy." Al Green's direction is flat, unvivacious; the photography as bad as the lowest of the usual Warner Brothers' work; the microphone badly adjusted to the voices; the child's acting so much sawdust-stuffing. Barrymore frequently recalls his earlier days, but the insistence upon the Barrymore profile, the Barrymore family eyebrow lifting, and the years of depression of beaus and dons and beasts, have left their mark in the dulling of a genuine comedian. No High (Hat) comedian remains. Griffith, the brilliant Raymond, who, in appearance and grace and whimsicality, continued the tradition introduced into the movie by "Jack" Barrymore, has aged—and Barrymore too—lost his svelte lines, and, with the talkies, not found his place, because of a voice almost mute. It was sad to see him in a brief comedy, *The Sleeping-Porch*, constructed to the expedience of his low voice by making of him a man suffering with a cold. A real sense of the logic of monotone and non-inflection in the talkie would recover to Griffith his place in the film-sun. His low voice is a soft misty hoarseness that can be exploited in the formula of speech-as-utterance. As it is, he appears for a moment as the Frenchman, Duval, slain in the shell-hole by Paul, the young German. The performance is mute but intense, it lends some character to a scene awkward, obvious and prolonged. And what will Griffith do now?

H. A. POTAMKIN.

DREAMS AND FILMS

The advocacy of another theory of the cinema may appear, at the moment, to be futile: a voice crying hopelessly in the wilderness of vulgarity. Everyone is talking at once, and a bewildered public floods stickily to the appalling attraction of the Latest. Yet there is an hypothesis which might help to co-ordinate the scattered tags of cinematic theory, and which should therefore be urged, even at the risk of adding another note to the prevailing discord.

The film is the dream of the post-war world. It is this not only in the obvious sense that it expresses many of the sub- or barely conscious aspirations of the generation, but also in its machinery. It is suggested here that a true line for the development of the film is that it should attempt to intensify this, so that a picture should be, in appearance, an interesting dream, perfectly remembered and artistically presented.

The more the analogy of the true film and the dream is pursued, the more numerous the points of affinity appear, whilst they are practically unopposed by points of obvious difference. First, the dull subfusc tinting generally adopted for films, until the last year, gives uniformity. This is true even of the more dazzling treatment accorded to what is wide, open, or spacious. Now it is extremely rarely that colours

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appear in dreams. If, in dreams, we are conscious of a colour at all, it is usually as an intellectual appreciation—that particular hair is red, or fields are brown. A very few people seem to possess chromatic sense in dreams, but as a general rule it does not exist, and the values are purely those of relative clearness or depth, as in the world through a camera. The screen world, too, is still essentially a shadow world, for the latest polychromatic spectacles are monstrosities, superimposed upon the wave of successful vulgarity, and completely out of the true line of development. The ability to combine rhythmic movement of forms with a concentration upon particular points is an advantage which the film is the only medium to possess, and this can be achieved by purely tonal effects far more easily and clearly than with the aid of any pseudo-realistic additions. And in a film, as in a dream, two dimensions are enough.

The love of analogy shown in dreams, which turns a row of sheep into a row of soldiers, the soldiers into Buckingham Palace, and Buckingham Palace into the Palace Music hall, is also one of the most familiar possessions of the cinema. Havelock Ellis has shown, and Lewis Carroll illustrated, that a similarity of form immediately suggests, to the unconscious, a transition from the one idea to the other. So the fusion obtained by the camera's "mix" gives a transition of interest, at the desired speed, through a similarity of forms: as when the hand of the light woman, holding a cigarette, fuses to that of the heavy villain, holding a dagger. Actually the trick has been strained and overdone until good-mannered directors are frightened of it. But it remains one of the great advantages of the medium, nevertheless.

The film, better than any other form of artistic expression, can give the terrible Alice and the Red Queen feeling of exertion without progression, that of complete paralysis, or that of falling from an immense height, all so frequent in dreams. Flux and fusion, vague but important irrelevancies, and a constantly rising and falling rhythm, the film alone can visually portray. It can do it so well, moreover, even already, that audiences interested in the development of a picture often react to it by making the same strangulated gestures, to help the protagonists on the screen, as those made by people sleeping, and experiencing particularly vivid dreams. The reaction to a film play by Vertoff may be as strong, but as removed from the conscious intelligence, as that to any nightmare. Whilst the desirability of artificial nightmares is perhaps dubious, the ability so to produce them is at least interesting.

It is a peculiar quality of dreams that, as they are hardly ever coloured, so they scarcely ever employ the aural mechanism. We are conscious of what people wish to express, but usually intuitively, or Belshazzar-like. Words are actually heard occasionally, but rather as a theme, a refrain, than as continuous dialogue. And here again cinematic practise must comply. It is already being seen how barren is the purely naturalistic speaking film. If sound is to be used, it should be selected and emphasised words, or carefully and sensitively synchronised music, and chromatic and vocal effects should be used only where tremendous emphasis is desired. In this respect, as in others, the film might copy the dream.

Of course all this has been noticed, and partially attempted.

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And of course it would be horrible to think of audiences miserably attending cinemas to study the disclosure of their own or anyone else's unconscious. The present generation, as Mr. Aldous Huxley reiterates, is already sick with the overcontemplation of its own psychology. Yet despite these two facts—that the dreamy film is now out of fashion (it *was* messy, and it is a fairly justified maxim that "thou shalt do no Murnau") and that healthy audiences do not demand cinema, but movies—the dream film hypothesis is worth study. Freud, Man Ray, and others, may have played at it, and in *A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing* the idea was definitely and consciously exploited. But up to now it has hardly been formulated clearly. And the present is a blare of sound.

As a footnote to the secondary and obvious idea of the film as the expression of the national subconscious, it may be noticed that already this quality has been generally shown. And this before the complete arrival of the talkie has made the geographical distribution of films, temporally at all events, a necessarily national affair. America produced for years romances dealing with that Wild West which is the spiritual heritage, commercially repressed, of every 75 per cent. American. England produced, for years after the war, the sentimental apple-blossom stuff which then seemed so particularly remote from a depressing and reconstructive reality. France produced, in an interminable parade of fancy dress, the national picaresque. Germany, where conscious and unconscious are more obviously coincident, produced increasingly mechanised pictures. For the ordinary man visits a cinema to "get outside himself"; that is, is get in-

side himself. What pleases him is the display of lavish wealth and spurious luxury of an incredibly High Life. He loves, too, the extravagant sentiment which commerce officially rejects. He loves the sexual preoccupations which are considered vicious in his own environment. He loves what he can't get. This love finds its outlet in the natural medium of dreams and the artificial one of the cinema. Each man and each nation has a different technique.

The film, then, is to some extent the subconscious—the transmuted and regulated dream life—of the people. As most peoples have at the moment mainly bad dreams, and the transmuting alchemists are avowedly out for gold only, the results are rather depressing. But, if only it were realised that the film, by adopting and exploiting the mechanism of the dream, could give itself fuller realisation and so greater success, something might yet be done.

The theory is an incomplete one, here imperfectly and only most briefly outlined, and I do not claim too much for it. But it is a theory. And, in the present welter of unorganised vulgarity, Heaven, not alone, knows that one is wanted.

C. J. PENNETHORNE HUGHES.

ENGLAND'S STRONGEST SUIT

It is exhilarating to find a branch of cinematography in which England is not totally outclassed.

Let us talk of our joys.

The camera is of axiomatic value to the medical profession. It can supply a moving record which can be run backwards so that (for example) changes in living tissue cells can be traced to their origin; it can furnish an impeccable description of an operation carried out by a master hand; it can pass on the experience of years in as many minutes.

Twenty-five years ago the first surgical operation was filmed in a London Hospital; the cameraman fainted. To-day, Kodak has a long list of important titles. From St. Bartholomew's Hospital come: *Carcinoma of the Breast, Treated with Radium* (lasting on the screen 13 minutes) and *Blood Transfusion* (14 minutes), both by Geoffrey Keynes, F.R.C.S. From King's College Hospital: *Radical Amputation of Left Breast for Duct Carcinoma* (16 minutes), by Cecil P. G. Wakeley, F.R.C.S., *Prostatectomy*, (29 minutes), *Litholopaxy* (14 minutes), and *Left Nephrectomy* (24 minutes), all by Sir John Thomson Walker. Other valuable documents (contributed by the London Hospital, the Chelsea Hospital for Women, the Royal Alexander Hospital for Sick

Children, and St. Mark's Hospital) include: *Craniotomy* (15 minutes), by Hy. Sessions Souttar, C.B.E., F.R.C.S.; *Uterine Prolapse* (22 minutes), by Alexander Galletly, F.R.C.S.; and *Perineal Excision of the Rectum* (30 minutes), by J. P. Lockhart-Mummery. There are, also, in the Kodak catalogue, films relating to veterinary science: *Operation for an Abdominal Cryptorchid* (19 minutes) and *Ventricle Stripping Operation* (20 minutes), both by Professor Frederick Hobday, C.M.G., F.R.C.V.S.

These films were taken on small scale, panchromatic, non-flam stock. Expense, safety and convenience arbitrarily dictated the medium. (The Ciné-Kodak Film is reversal film with a fine grain that gives a brilliant image. The camera can be reloaded in daylight, and is simple to manipulate.) Illumination, in most cases, was supplied by a combination of daylight and artificial light.

With the hand ciné-camera, of negligible weight, the photographer is not in danger of interfering with surgeon, anaesthetist or assistants; while the cost of a 16mm. film, with titles, lasting 15 minutes on the screen, is only £10. Again, the projector does not require a skilled man, and any room can be used as a theatre. The Model A "Kodascope" projects a picture 52ins. by 39ins. suitable for audiences up to 100 in number. Moreover, a special warning is issued; for, with surgical films, "a curious result of the large screen is to magnify the apparent speed of movement in relation to the size of the picture." Thus, it is actually advisable to keep the size of the picture as small as possible.

As regards standard film the French have been most enterprising. Clement-Maurice Doyen began ten years before the

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war; De Martel has produced surgical films in colour; De Pauchet is credited with excellent use of animated designs; and Lutembacher's sound film, dealing with the artificially stimulated beating of an isolated heart, is held, by the French press, to be exceptional.

England can answer, with quality if not quantity. Ronald J. Canti's *Cultivation of Living Tissue Cells including Cancer* is an achievement magnificently praised by the medical cognoscenti. This work is part of an investigation in Cancer which is being carried out at the Strangeways Research Hospital in Cambridge and at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London. Radium emanation upon living cells cultivated from the periosteum of the fowl embryo and from a mass of Jensen's Rat Sarcoma is chiefly demonstrated in Canti's work.

An accelerated motion apparatus was arranged so that the microscope and culture were kept in an incubator at a temperature of 38° C. Every precaution was taken that vibrations did not reach the apparatus. The time factor was recorded by means of a watch photographed on to one corner of the frame.* Photographs were taken, in different experiments, at intervals of 3-10-30 or 60 seconds.

In the first reel of the film the student is given an idea of the magnification by a preliminary shot of a slide held in a hand. The next shot is an enlargement of the central portion of the slide; the fragment of tissue is now clearly visible. The third

* Kodak considers it too difficult for the eye to follow two things at the same time, and suggests an intermittent time factor. The idea being to punch a series of holes in the film at definite spacings; these give a momentary flash at the end of each time interval.

shot is taken under a 50mm. objective and is photographed during growth; cells can be observed wandering out from the explant. First a wandering cell, at the bottom of the picture, then slender fibroblasts commencing to wander out from the top left hand corner. Soon the fragment is covered by out-wandering cells, giving it a fluffy appearance. Finally, the whole field fills with cells and, here and there, close attention will reveal cell division.

Further shots show: high magnification of cells undergoing division; a close up of a vegetative fibroblast with nucleus, nucleoli, and fat globules; a cell, with fine pseudopodia, showing amoeboid movements; pictures, taken with oil immersion objectives, of the migration of chromosomes during division; motile cells of malignant tissue; and the effects of irradiation on the cells.

In later experiments direct illumination was substituted for dark ground illumination. A great difficulty was the intensity of the light which caused the cells to degenerate. Selo panchromatic emulsion, having a speed of 700 H and D, was threaded in the camera. The advantages of dark ground illumination are: that it is possible to work with critical illumination "with the result that even though employing a numerical aperture of 0.95, a high degree of resolution can be obtained"; and that the interfaces between two substances of different refractive index can be easily distinguished.

British Instructional have plans to continue production along the lines of F. Melville's X-Ray picture. This film begins with a shot through the mouth showing movements of vocal chords. Other shots show: articulation of the arm and abduction and adduction of bones of fingers and wrist;

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bones of forearm in supination and pronation; flexion and extension at the elbow joint; ankle joint under action of Dorsi-flexion and Plantarflexion; and the movement of chest in inspiration and expiration with changes of position of ribs and diaphragm while the heart is seen pulsating between the frame.

The Royal College of Physicians of London celebrated the 300th anniversary of the publication of *Exercitatio Anatomica de Motu Cordis et Sanguinis* with a film of the dissections and experiments made by William Harvey himself. But, like the makers of a series of lecture films, they do not wish for any details to appear in print.

Concomitant with these medical films are many propaganda pictures which it behoves the conscientious to praise. The British Social Hygiene Council hire cinema vans, loan lantern slides, arrange exhibitions, map out campaigns, etc. (A week's specimen campaign cost about £230 and audiences totalled 15,715.) The Council has been responsible for the production of films dealing with venereal disease. All are on non-flam stock. Subjects range from technical medical films (diagnosis and treatment of syphilis and gonorrhoea) and popular medical films (for exhibition to nurses and midwives), to popular instructional (biological aspects) and popular dramatic films.*

* Films produced by the Council include: *The Diagnosis and Treatment of Gonorrhoea in the Male* (8 reels) and *Manifestations and Diagnosis of Syphilis* (10 reels), both by Col. L. W. Harrison; *The Irresponsibles* (3 reels), an outline of female physiology, and *Deferred Payment* (3 reels), both made in co-operation with British Instructional; and *Youth and Life* (6 reels), *Dear Friend* (4 reels) and *Waste and Economy* (2 reels).

The Dental Board of the United Kingdom is another indigenous manufacturer of health-making celluloid (Hollywood scribes, excuse). The Board was established by the Dentist's Act of 1921. Lectures, cinema films, lantern slides and literature are provided free of charge† . . .

Not so bad for our own England!

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

THIS THRILLING INSTALMENT

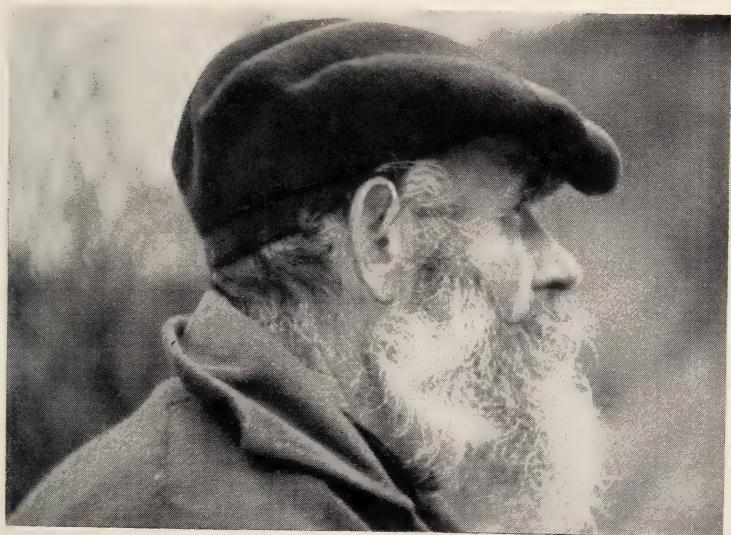
Winding, like snakes through the grass of consciousness, the idle thoughts of the critic's brain. . . . The steady succession of startling discoveries, the sudden wealth of sinful disclosures, the overwhelming realisation of cinematic sins to be righted. . . . More fodder for the weekly vacuum, two whole columns of it.

Like a synchronised adventure serial, a stale kick in the familiar finale, the certain knowledge of certain salvation from certain extinction. Winding on, and on. The problem of next week's feature becomes the worry of how to reconcile last week's pot boiler with next month's startling revelation.

† The Dental Board has produced two one-reelers; *The Leaflet*, and *Beware of Demons*. How generously the careful are rewarded may well be judged from the titles!



From *Mor-Vran*, Jean Epstein's new film. See Comment and Review.





From *Cain*, the new film of Leon Poirier, turned on the island of Nossi Bé—a drama of the South Seas. Thomy Bourdelle as Cain.





Caïn. Above: Caïn and Zouzour, played by Rama Tahe, a young Creole who makes her debut in this film. See Comment and Review.
Below: Caïn and Zouzour outside their primitive home.





Cain. Leon Poirier's film which will not be shown until November.
Thomy Bourdelle as Cain with a giant leaf of ravenal.



Zouzour bowed before Caïn in token of her submission to his lordship and love.



A fine production still from *Caïn*, and below, Caïn laying his fruit offering on the tender ravenal leaf.





Skandal um Eva

Nero-Porten-Film

From *The Eva Scandal*, the new Henny Porten film directed by Pabst. Above : a school class listens with mingled feelings to the noise made by the feet of their cheerful comrades on the floor above. Below : The school staff in conference, all at sixes and sevens to plot bigger and better punishments for unwitting pupils. A typical Pabst touch.



Skandal um Eva



Borderline, the first film made by Paul Robeson. Direction : K. Macpherson. These two stills suggest the wages of virtue and the wages of sin. Paul Robeson enjoying his self-ordained canonization above, and Helga Doorn below gives her interpretation of those little deaths we die.



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Even a publicity man has a soul of his own.

And so they muster; the discarded ideas, the stunts which never quite bore fruit, the jests which would have passed if only they could have filled two columns, the epigrams which didn't because the editor wouldn't let them. The dustbin of the thought machine.

Like a caravan, winding over the desert, parched with the brain bankruptcy of the commercial cinema. . . . Little thoughts, which yet may live to have their column—wedged in between the more important captures of the advertising department. Mud in the pan from which false gold has earlier on been stolen.

Sometimes they assert themselves and clog the lathe which turns the epigrams—carefully culled, of course, from other peoples' conversation. It is so beneficial to the scribbler, having such intellectual friends. Sometimes they clog, and stick.

There is a saying in America, where newspaper feature men receive fan mail which puts the stars to shame, that any mother, having succeeded merely in giving the world yet another columnist, would drown the brat at birth to save it future agonies. Only, in America, where there is a saying that any mother who has a son who is a feature writer who receives fan mail, etc., they don't put it quite like that.

Does anyone ever see these serials nowadays, or do Universal make them for their own amusement? One could so easily imagine Universal being amused by them. That is the terror of the chapter play. It has no ending. Like a feature column. It burdens the producer; this week's thrill

is but the starting point for next week's agony. Endless, like a snake in the grass of consciousness.

Three London columnists, since the July *Close Up*, have already purloined, made use of, and served up as their own particular dish, the Smelling-Feeling cinema idea. One does not blame, one does not even reproach with faltering voice. One understands. One sympathises. One. One. One. One. One, two, three, four.

There are so many things to write about. And so few things worth the trouble. More ammunition for the mental pea-shooter, waste product useless on the two column stretch. There are

the talkies,
the sudden rebirth (imaginary) of the silent cinema
(interlude for light relief)
the wide screen (wider, perhaps, but no nearer)
and television.

But why write about them? Must one, really? It is so difficult, being interested in the commercial cinema.

Then we have the multi-linguals, those happy polyglot brothers who talk so much more on paper than they ever will on the screen. *Elstree Calling* in 10 languages, *including Belgian*—official announcement by British International.

These people take themselves so seriously.

But we have lately, said, he, adopting his best style, been applying ourselves to the problems of cinematic humour. (Yes, the editor presented his compliments.)

It is surprising that the cinema, with its sharply divided camps, should yet have left one of its strongest cards unplayed. It is so refreshing, these hot days, to dabble in meta-

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phors. The potentialities of the filmic image as an amusing stimulus have been practically unexplored.

The screen is so un-funny. We have our Polly Morans and our Marion Davieses, our Charles Austins and our Charles Kings—although perhaps unconscious funniness shouldn't count—but are they cinema?

Gentlemen—pardon me, my error—they are not, as the Empire Crusader said. What is this Empire Crusade, by the way? And why?

The screen is un-funny because, with a few exceptions, it has never attempted to be directly funny. There is no filmic comedy in its own right. Our films aim at representational comedy. The laughter of the screen is the laughter of the stage and the novel. Slapstick, in its purer and least edifying form, is nearer to cinema than any other forms of alleged "cinema" comedy, but while admitting slapstick is a stage in the right direction, it cannot in itself be regarded as a complete form of cinematics.

The humours of the screen—how hard they labour, these heavies—are not of the screen. They merely achieve accidental screen form. Which is a different thing. There is a continuously changing cult of the humorous on the screen, even among alleged film students who ought to know better. Really, these book-of-rule film students who add montage to their last year's product. . . . It is so easy, not to take things seriously.

Once upon a time the cult was Chaplin. It remained at Chaplin for a long while. Indeed, in many of the more learned quarters it is still Chaplin. Chaplin is the major movement in the fiddle-de-diddle of film comedy. Then

Mack Sennett had an innings, coming in on the oboe and going out on the toot. Then the craze swung, in and out.

Lupino Lane had his knock, abode his little hour or two and drew his pay. Lloyd Hamilton met with a mixed reception (the naice fellow, so refrained) and Our Gang (a poisonous crew, my children, a poisonous crew) held the fort. Lately we have had a dose of Laurel and Hardy, and at any minute now the wind may veer round to the Chaplin quarter again.

Now what in the world, as the fallen angel remarked casually, is the sense of it? Are any of these men, rightly considered, film comedians? Are they true interpreters of cinematic mime? (Really, this Castle fellow, why doesn't he wisecrack for a change? It is so much less odious).

The Chaplin cult is like the measles. Four out of every five have it. We had it badly ourselves once, but the doctor frowned and looked thoughtful. We choked back manly tears at the *Circus* and looked pensive on emerging from the *Gold Rush*.

Good work, certainly, no one with any sense questions that fact. But, in all seriousness, are they filmic comedy? The *Circus*, which personally I thought to be the better of the two films, although I know the contrary is the more general opinion is a sequence of over-familiar slapstick, built around an even more familiar Pagliacci story, very cleverly cemented with that atmosphere of intellectual despair with which Chaplin dopes his audiences.

Chaplin's success as a comedian lies in his ability to make capital out of his own somewhat simple reaction to what people fondly imagine to be the Eternal Clown Problem. Chaplin,

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being an excellent clown, wrongly imagines he should be something which he equally wrongly imagines to be better than a clown, and hence the much commercialised *On With The Motley* theme which seems to be his chief stock in trade.

Let us not belittle Chaplin. Among the blind the one-eyed make glorious monarchs. His pathos, if trite, is well conveyed, and he has a wonderful sense of editing values. His pictures are beautiful examples of film mounting. The *Gold Rush* in particular repays constant visits. If contemporary Hollywood producers would take a leaf from his diary and cut their films to the bare bone as he does, American cinema might stand a chance of getting some more brains into it.

But Chaplin's work as a cutter, a producer, an art director, and—as he probably thinks—a tragedian, is begging the question. Granting that a film must obviously be a completion of all these factors, individual competence without the underlying ability to link them together intelligently and understandingly robs them of that completeness without which cinema cannot exist.

As a film comedian, does Chaplin show any signs of unifying his personality with the fundamentals of cinema? Are his films film comedies?

Perhaps they approach the ideal nearer than the work of his rivals. Chaplin at least has the knack of unifying his caper with his background, a mobile clowning on a large scale. Even though his films miss the complete satisfaction at which they aim, they are strong wine after the Vichy water of Harold Lloyd.

Now Lloyd, on commercial standards of popular entertain-

ment, is pretty well the perfect film comedian. That means to say, he stars in pictures which make a lot of money, which draw a lot of people, which contain a bellyfull of laughs. A Lloyd comedy is a team picture, built up step by step by gag-men. They keep popular audiences in fits of hysterical laughter, they warm the cockles of the heart. Indent idea about becoming a publicity man.

Yet no one regards Lloyd's films as film comedy. They are looked upon as skilful pieces of laughter-making workmanship. Which is exactly what they are. They have as much in common with cinematic comedy as *Charley's Aunt* has with *Hamlet*. On the other hand apparently qualified judges are making the mistakes of regarding works by other comics, perhaps a little more subtle than Lloyd, as great film comedy.

In America almost everything King Vidor produces is regarded as filmic comedy. Which is exactly what it isn't. Vidor, as a director, has an eye for popular pictorial values, a very firm technical touch, and an occasional suggestion of that underlying smooth sophistication which is Lubitsch's gift to the film world. Lubitsch has much to answer for. He gave Hollywood ideas. They have copied the formulæ without understanding the symbols.

Now Lubitsch, as I see it, is one of the very few men who have ever come near to filmic comedy. Yes, I know Lubitsch is out of fashion at the moment, but there it is. It is difficult, in judging his work, to single out the tinselled shafts of his cynical wit from the genuinely cinematic symbols he occasionally employs. But they are to be found therein if only one takes the trouble to run and read.

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Filmic comedy, it would seem, must be satisfying as film and not as celluloid representation. Herein lies another pitfall of the talkies—the direct picture, transplanted straight from the farcical stage. *Rookery Nook* was an example. Although personally I thought it was badly cramped, and lacked that atmosphere of hilarious buffoonery which catches one under the chin at the Aldwych, it was generally regarded as an ace among talkie comedies. Even admitting it was great entertainment for the masses—which personally I could not see—it was emphatically not film comedy.

However, only the very undiscerning can fail to distinguish between the photographed play, which amuses in its entrances and exits, its slippery stairs and its verbal gags, and the more studiously contrived capers of the attempted film comedy. It is in these latter, the Chaplins, the Hardys, and the Lanes, that the snag lies.

To return to our sheep, however, as the lute player said in Arcady. Lubitsch, in some of his silent film comedies for Warner Brothers, reached down near the fundamentals. Take *So This is Paris*, a Monte Blue picture which is well worth reviving. He had a sequence in which Blue, drunk on a settee, was in a stage where he imagined things. He thought his ebony walking stick—which, mark you, had an important bearing on the cinematic development of the film as against the literary progression of the story—was being thrust down his throat. There was a lengthy sequence in which the stick spun round and about the reclining Blue, now and then darting down his mouth, without awakening any trace of surprise or movement in the figure.

Slight and unimpressive when told literally. That, of

course, is its strong point. Basic cinema cannot be explained *en courant* in terms of literary symbols. Perhaps it would not be basic cinema if it could.

But the difference can be sensed. On the one side, the calculated caper, transplanted. On the other, the filmic image, essentially the product of the screen, creating a symbol satisfying, and at the same time amusing, through methods incapable of comparison with the stage.

Leaving Lubitsch aside, what efforts have been made to treat humour cinematically have mostly come from the French, curiously enough. One recalls that delicious silent film *The Late Matthew Pascal* in which the director so brilliantly treated the Pirandello elusiveness.

The miming throughout the picture, rhythmically pranced to the content of the sequence, was as divorced from reality as is the average Hollywood back-stager. But it was cinema. It was film comedy. Its sins of omission, which were numerous, can be forgiven. If only because it revealed Ivan Mosjoukine to be an actor of understanding.

A child, on learning to play the piano—tinkle, tinkle, little star—starts with five-finger exercises. The travail which produces the pom-pom-pom of Rachmaninoff's little Prelude is painful both to the prodigy and the bachelor in the next door flat.

It should be the same with film comedy. Some understanding of its underlying principles should be sought first in the abstract experimental film. One remembers, with that mental imagery which is one's sole contact with the essentially cinematic isolated compositions of Man Ray, accidental groupings in the works of such American producers as Roy

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Del Ruth, a snippet here and there from Chaplin, a touch or two from *Bed and Sofa*—an over-rated film if ever there was one, and any number of sequences from Mickey.

The satisfaction of design, as design, of composition for its own form. The appreciation of unity. The sense of completeness. The welding of the whole into cinematic comedy, as divorced from the commercial Chaplin as cabaret from brains.

Winding, like snakes through the grass of consciousness, go the idle thoughts of the critic's brain. . . .

Don't miss the next thrilling instalment, to be continued at this theatre next month.

But not likely.

HUGH CASTLE.

EISENSTEIN IN HOLLYWOOD

What will Eisenstein do to Hollywood? Or, what will Hollywood do to Eisenstein? That the two should be brought into an attempted confraternity is a circumstance of uncommon moment. An irresistible force meeting an immovable body.

Cinema history records the names of many foreign directors brought to Hollywood on the strength of personal

achievements in their native environment. Tourneur, Dupont, Murnau, Berger, Stein, Lubitsch, Fejos, Korda, Curtiz, Seastrom. These are some of them—each received on his arrival with open arms and a fanfare of publicity trumpets. Time passes. What becomes of them? One of two things—either they “go Hollywood” or they go home. They do not remain if they remain what they were. Only Lubitsch, as a singular exception, has succeeded in holding on while at the same time retaining in some degree his distinctive cinema personality.

Individualism has no place in Hollywood. American pictures are pattern-made. The patterns are dictated by the box office, and the box office is the composite voice of the Crowd expressed in the clink of silver coin. There is no arguing with the Crowd. It wants what it wants. And mostly it doesn't want art nor education nor uplift nor cinematic stylism, nor does it care two pennies for any picture because of its director, unless perhaps it be Cecil de Mille. And Hollywood has grown rich and great and unshakable because it knows this and accepts it and profits by it.

Yet, of all persons in the world, Hollywood has opened its gates to Eisenstein. The most dynamic individualist in the history of motion pictures. The personification of sublimated cinematic art. The most puissant protagonist of social education by means of the screen. In short, the embodiment of every fundamental taboo of Hollywood. And Eisenstein, on his part, has come to Hollywood, of all places in the world the least in accord with his ideals and purposes and philosophy.

A strange paradox, indeed. Eisenstein, the Russian

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socialist, an impregnable individualist. Hollywood, giant offspring of capitalism and commercialism, the subjugator of the individualist and enforcing a system of collectivism beyond anything yet attained in communistic Russia. Eisenstein and Hollywood. The positive and negative poles of the cinema. The one thinking in terms of art, of philosophy, of sociology. The other, with no comprehension of these terms, devoting its energies and experience to supplying agreeable entertainment as a commodity to a self-satisfied world in its moments of pastime and mental inactivity.

The outcome of this equivocal alliance will be awaited with more than usual interest. To the great Crowd, however—the many millions whose daily patronage of the cinema insures Hollywood's existence—it is a matter of little or no moment. The vast majority of the American public as yet know nothing of Eisenstein. They have not heard of him. His *Potemkin*, his *Ten Days that shook the World*, his *Old and New* have had but scant showing here and relatively scant appreciation. They are not to the American taste, either in subject or in treatment. Russia and the United States are socially and psychologically antipodal.

However, true to its gift of showmanship, Hollywood will see to it that the Americans are made acquainted with its latest acquisition. Following the example of Barnum, it is ever on the lookout for whatsoever or whomsoever is exploitable as an attraction. Eisenstein is its latest find, and already a publicity campaign is under way to arouse an interest and curiosity in "the man who has taken Europe by storm and whose pictures are to-day the subject of world-wide discussion." And by the time his Hollywood-made film is

released, the Crowd will have been drilled into an eager readiness to see it. Its verdict, however, is unforeseeable. But whatever it may be, Hollywood will not lose on the film—though it may lose Eisenstein.

It was my pleasure to call on him, at the Paramount studio, a day or two after his arrival. My immediate impression of him, against an already prepared background of acquaintanceship with his work and reputation, was that of a man who, although in Hollywood, was not of it and never would be. In the formal, conventional quarters of his two-roomed office he reminded me of nothing so much as a caged lion. Not that he was himself yet conscious of captivity or restraint. That consciousness will come later, with experience. I have seen many a robust genius—director, author, artist—cooped up in a regulation studio office under orders to go ahead and create, “and make it snappy!” but never have I seen one to whom this environment with its stark, unmitigated implications of commercialism seemed so great an impertinence as it does to this leonine Russian.

CLIFFORD HOWARD.

THE FUTURE OF THE FILM

By S. M. EISENSTEIN.

(In an interview with Mark Segal.)

While recent developments in the all-talking film are of the greatest interest, the future belongs, in my opinion, rather to the sound film—that is to say, the film in which sound is not used naturalistically. The line of departure, in one direction, is indicated by the excellent Mickey Mouse films. In these for example, a graceful movement of the foot is accompanied by appropriate music, which is, as it were, the audible expression of the mechanical action. Just so, in the classical Japanese drama, the act of hara-kiri is accompanied by a graphic tune played behind the scenes. Another parallel is the use of appropriate sounds to indicate changes of scene in broadcast plays.

Of the sound-recording systems Blattner's magnetised wire, devised by the German engineer Stille, has the greatest possibilities, for it is the only system which permits of artistic control, just as the visual film can be controlled artistically by means of cutting and editing. It is unfortunate that the adoption of this system is hindered by financial considerations, one

of which is the amount of capital invested in other sound recording and reproducing systems. What the sound film requires is a man with the vision, initiative and courage of Henry Ford. Stille is now working on the problem of obtaining optical as well as sound records on his magnetised wire, and the solution, which I believe to be practicable, will hold out enormous possibilities.

Unlike sound, the application of colour and stereoscopy to the film will effect no radical departure: they involve no structural changes, but merely mark further stages in the evolution towards perfection. They do not add new elements to the film: they are improvements in elements already existing like the chemical, printing and other processes used in making films.

Stereoscopic films will at first give the onlooker a feeling of strangeness, but this will pass away after sixty feet of film have been shown.

Coloured films have already shown that, so far from detracting from the impression produced by the films, they contribute an enhanced interest. It should be realised that black-and-white photography is itself a part of colour photography, and that an impression of colour can be produced by the use of good lighting alone. There is no reason to doubt that, applied with taste and delicacy, colour will make it possible to achieve very fine effects.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

Owing to an error in the letter sent by the French publishers, the price of the postcards from Jean Dreville's film, *Quand Les Epis se Courbent*, was stated incorrectly in the June issue of *Close Up*. The correct price for these postcards is one shilling and sixpence a set, instead of seven and sixpence. Sets can be supplied on application to the London office. Those who have bought sets at seven shillings and sixpence are being notified of this error and money is being refunded.

MONTAGE ACTING.

S. M. Eisenstein wrote so much about the Japanese theatre that we cried "Kismet" when Tokujiro Tsutsui was announced in the International Season at the Globe Theatre.

Eisenstein spoke of the *montage* in Japanese acting, of disintegrated acting. ("Acting with only the right arm. Acting with one leg. Acting with the neck and head only. The whole process of the general death agony was disintegrated into the solo playing through of each *part* separately from the others: the parts of the leg, the parts of the arms, the part

of the head.”) But the players at the Globe did not choose to be so exotic, reminding us rather of the Carved Elephant and Castle of the Rising Sun.

Costumes and faces were a change from the typical British film star; the one who cannot go to *the party* because she has no fancy dress, when all the time she is a fancy dress.

O. B.

ADVANCE MONOLOGUE.

“ The talkies,” Alfred Hitchcock said to me, “ have given most of us a past about which we need to be ashamed. Why, we used to bore a hole in an actor’s head and superimpose tiny images representing his thoughts! Sound has done away with such clumsiness. I am thinking of a sequence from *Enter Sir John*. A murder has been committed. There is a shot of the curious outside the villa in which the body was found; a picture with a Fleet Street look. Then, a cut to the notice-board in the greenroom of the local theatre; attention being focussed on the fact that an understudy is playing. After that, a glimpse of the curtain rising: immediately followed by a close up of the grille opening into the cell of the condemned actress. The camera holds her face, but the voices in the theatre talk about the understudy. The woman’s eyes just respond to the comments and her thoughts are pretty plain. Such touches, of course, can only be added to a good story; those who lose the significance of the finer points being satisfied with the drama alone.”

“ *Potemkin*,” he continued with a twinkle in his eye, “ is

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the only Russian film I have seen. Personally, I place a good deal of trust in my feeling for musical formulas. *Black-mail*, AS I PLANNED IT, began with the arrest of the felon and ended with the arrest of the girl. Two unknown detectives, in the very last shot, were to be shown talking about the girls they were going to take out to Lyons. Coda. Also, according to the disciples of the happy end, uncommercial."

"And then this quick cutting. Each cut means a new set up. Supposing I have the simple notion of following my characters with the camera on a trolley. It means taking away the ceiling (of the kind of sets I principally used in *Enter Sir John*) and putting down a new floor. Time is money, as you know, or, rather, as the supervisors know. Again, naturalism! My audiences would go crazy looking at the kind of wall-paper the Russians would put in the rooms of my last film."

"I have tried to make worthwhile compromises with *Enter Sir John*. The plot hinges on vocal tricks exploited by the actor hero; the voice of conscience is materialised; and the villain is exposed by being given a play to read."

"And it was amusing," Alfred finished, "to direct the German and English artistes. For example, the English hardly like to come into the room where a murder has been committed, and the Germans are most curious about it."

It *would* be amusing to have all the ideas of a Hitchcock, but it would, at the same time, be something of a strain to see that they were properly carried out.

O. B.

THE BAIRD SCREEN.

Instead of neon tubes and Kerr Cells, ordinary filament lamps were arranged to form a screen. These lamps light up, one after the other, and give a brilliant image: "by their successful application to television, a great barrier to screen projection—lack of brilliancy—has been finally overcome."

This device was patented by Baird in 1923, but technical difficulties prevented its demonstration before the beginning of July, 1930.

The screen is a honeycomb of 2,100 metal filament lamps set in little cubicles. The lamps are covered with ground glass. A gigantic commutator switches on one lamp at a time in succession as the contact of the commutator revolves. In one-twelfth of a second the 2,100 lamps are switched on and off.

"In operation the incoming television signal is first of all amplified, and this powerful current is then fed to the revolving commutator, which switches it to every lamp in turn. The current is strong at a bright part of the picture and weak at a dim part, so that the little lamps are bright or dark accordingly, and the picture is built up of a mosaic of bright and dark lamps."

In all other television devices the lamps were more instantaneous, the picture being reproduced by a little spot of light; now, a large number of lamps are simultaneously alight.

Television is ready for the theatres! A small screen, for the reception of news items, costs £300, while a normal screen costs £5,000.

O. B.

CLOSE UP

GERMANY CRITICISES THE SOUND-FILM.

It was on the 3rd June, 1929, that *The Singing Fool* was first presented in Germany, the film which was destined to revolutionise Germany's film history and which was the forerunner of now one year's experimenting, which has reached a climax with the films *The Blue Angel*, and *Westfront 1918*.

To celebrate the tone-film's first birthday, the Berlin weekly paper *Der Film* recently published a special section which included surveys and criticisms of the year's activities by well known and unknown critics.

Lion Feuchtwanger considered that whereas technical questions were being suprisingly well solved, the sphere of sound-film dialogue was entirely new ground, the laws of which had hardly been recognised. Manuscripts designed specially for talking-films must be worked upon.

Heinrich Mann was amazed at the progress in one year, and saw a great future ahead. A third famous author, Stefan Zweig, found that the sound-film was to-day in its most interesting stage—the experimental stage; he found the talking-film approaching too near to drama and he pointed out the necessity of establishing principles for an individual art-form. Max Reinhardt considered that the talky offered possibilities of attaining a greater sense of realism than even Meyerhold had achieved in *Brülle, China*.

The film producer Lupu Pick was more objective and less optimistic than the authors and theatre director. There had been undoubtedly many technical improvements which were

especially noticeable in *The Blue Angel* and *Die Letzte Kompagnie*; unfortunately however, the general good impression of *Westfront 1918* was diminished owing to the first quarter being entirely unintelligibly and indistinctly reproduced. Lupu Pick furthermore declared that the sound-film was not yet so advanced that one could say that it took one's breath away, nor would one be able to say this as long as no non-commercial experimental films were made to try out new possibilities. As long as dialogue merely replaced silent titles, one could not speak about real development.

In contrast to the arguments of these and other German savants, there was that of Miss Edith Neumann, an office girl in a large laundry. Miss Neumann used to enjoy the cinema, first on account of the silent films themselves, secondly because of the good musical accompaniment. Now that the sound-film had arrived, her interest had ceased for she desired to relax her mind after a hard day's work and found it impossible with the talky. The men's voices sounded as if coming out of graves and the women's voices were not much better.

It was left to Mr. Emil Haese, who works the lift in a large publishing firm, to disclose a most distressing side of the grave talky problem. He said:

"In former days when a film was bad one could close one's eyes. To-day one must also block up one's ears. That is asking *too* much."

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

CLOSE UP

ADVANCE NOTES ON CAIN.

Leon Poirier's latest film *Cain*, turned on the island of Nossi Bé, is now completed but will not be shown until November.

Cain, interpreted by Thomy Bourdelle, is a man who has not received all the advantages which progress offers, and revolting against modern times descends to evil instead of rising to good—the aim of civilisation. As he is about to reap the fruits of a dishonest action, Fate intervenes and Cain finds himself upon an uninhabited isle.

Here amidst gorgeous exotic scenery a new life commences with the adventures of a Crusoe. First his battle with Nature, then with savages who take him by surprise and finally a primitive love with a native woman, played by Rama Tahe, a young Creole who is said to have made a startling début.

Upon this island Cain learns to appreciate happiness, danger and suffering and is joyful as an animal. An unforeseen event permits him to repair the consequences of his bad deed and he has the occasion to return to the civilised world; but he is frightened and returns to his native wife, his children, and Nature, and continues to lead a life of contentment upon his island.

Leon Poirier has already shown the beauty of exotic scenery in *La Croisière Noire*, and the superb stills from his new film seem to foretell that *Cain* will not disappoint film-lovers.

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

MOR-VRAN.

La mer des Corbeaux.

Why seek for platitudinous superlatives to describe Jean Epstein's wonderful new film.

In an ever-moving series of poetically mounted pictures, Epstein presents one of those rare and so much needed revolts against present tendencies.

Mor-Vran was made with the excellent collaboration of the camera-men, Alfred Guichard, Albert Bres, Marcel Rebière and the assistant Henri Chaufier, and was turned during the winter tempests at the Ile de Sein on the boundaries of Brittany—at the edge of the world it would seem.

The sea as emotional power and as a symbol. The sea. The sea. Epstein discovers or fabricates hidden wonders. Enormous effects when the sea is followed by the swell of a camera. Tragedy. Not a month passes without a shipwreck and two of the three grave yards are consecrated to those lost at sea. The inhabitants are permanently dressed in black. White woman in black dress pathetically, pictorially and cinematographically compared with white sea against black cliffs. Subtitles as unpretentiously chosen as the shots.

Why strive for a literary criticism of a film which demonstrates to the few who have faith that the Cinema can be more powerful and truly more beautiful than poetry or painting.

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

CLOSE UP

HOLLYWOOD NOTES.

Two years ago, in face of doubt, criticism, scorn, and croaking prophecies of disaster, Hollywood undertook to become vocal. Firm in the faith that its first crude squawks were pregnant with momentous possibilities, it staked its very existence on this revolutionary departure by scrapping its old equipment and bonding itself to the extent of half a billion dollars for a new set-up. Results have already justified its faith, and perhaps in no respect is this more clearly reflected than in its schedule of production for the fiscal year 1930-31. Eleven hundred and sixty-five audible films will be turned out during the current twelve months, at an approximate combined cost of a hundred and seventy million dollars. This exceeds by more than forty millions the total expenditures of the Hollywood studios during the preceding year. Whatever may be said of its artistic development thus far, it is evident from this programme that the talking film has achieved world-wide popular approval and is at all events anything but financial and material failure which the cinema Jeremiahs so confidently predicted for it.

* * *

When Carl Laemmle secured the film rights to *All Quiet on the Western Front*, it was with the understanding that Universal should have first option on anything else that Remarque might write. Availing themselves of this stipulation the company have purchased the screen rights of the author's forthcoming book, *Camerad*. It is understood that the book will first be published serially in America in one of the popular

CLOSE UP

weekly magazines. This purchase of film rights in advance of publication is in furtherance of a general policy recently inaugurated by Universal, whereby the availability for the screen of plays as well as novels will be passed upon while the material is still in manuscript.

* * *

"Tin Pan Alley," the New York rendezvous of popular-song writers, has been transferred to Hollywood. Along with actors, playwrights, and novelists, the song-smiths of America have been lured to the cinema capital. According to a recent estimate, no less than ninety per cent. of this melic craft are now installed in the various Hollywood studios, where they are adding vastly to their incomes by hammering out lyrics and ballads for the noise-loving cinema fans. That there is versatility among them as well as specialized talent, is evidenced by the writing of an entire musical play by Irving Berlin, who will also direct its screen production for United Artists. Its title at the present writing is *Reaching for the Moon*. Bebe Daniels is scheduled to play the leading rôle.

* * *

M-G-M and Paramount-Publix (Lasky) have instituted two distinctly different methods of solving the foreign-market problem. The former are bringing France, Germany, Spain, Italy to Hollywood in the persons of European actors, directors, and playwrights. The latter are taking Hollywood to Europe in the establishing of branch studios abroad. Their first, at Joinville, near Paris, and already in operation, is to be followed by others as circumstances dictate. "We plan to produce seventy-two pictures this coming year in six

CLOSE UP

different languages," declares Mr. Lasky. "Whatever country shows the possibility of turning out good talking films will sooner or later have a Paramount studio established there. Eventually we expect that virtually every country of importance will have one of our studios." Which of the two methods will prove the more effective and practical is still wholly a matter of debate. At all events, Hollywood is keenly alert to the revived and increasing competition of Europe-made films, and the results of its present two-way experiment in meeting this competition will be watched with interest.

* * *

Achmed Abdullah, the Americanized Persian novelist, is a recent addition to the M-G-M scenario staff. His first job will be the writing of a story for Ramon Novarro, to fit the already selected title of *Song of India*.

* * *

Molnar's *Liliom* is being phono-filmed at the Fox studio, under the direction of Frank Borzage. It will be released under the engaging title of *Devil with Women*.

* * *

Universal have repented of their announced decision to discontinue the production of serials, or chapter films, and will produce four of this type during the coming year. The first, *The Indians are Coming*, in twelve episodes of two reels each, is already in production.

* * *

"The talking picture," says Mr. Lasky, "will change the love-making language of America." Mr. Lasky's qualification to speak with authority on this important subject is

CLOSE UP

vouched for by the publicity department of Paramount-Publix, which states that " his study of human emotions and human reactions to them has carried him successfully through two decades of inspired showmanship."

* * *

Italone is the latest independent foreign-language company to be established in Hollywood. Its initial production, *Georgette e Compagni*, directed by Alfredo Sabato, is an adaptation of a popular Italian stage play of the same title by Piero Mazzolotti, with music by Luigi Cavarra.

* * *

Grace Moore, of the Metropolitan Opera Company, will make her screen debut in *Jenny Lind*, now in production at the M-G-M studio under the direction of Sidney Franklin, with Alphonse Martell, of France, serving as technical director.

C. H.

BOOK REVIEWS.

MORE FINANCE.

Exhibitors' Accounts and *Renters' Accounts* have already been dealt with in *Close Up*. Messers. Gee and Co. have added *Producers' Accounts and Organisation* to the series.

It is peculiar to think that Charles H. Travis, the author, can have such an extensive knowledge of the clerical end of this film business and not, probably, be conscious of the name of the latest star to have her legs " lifted " (legs are so much more important than faces nowadays, aren't they?).

CLOSE UP

Indeed, we don't think Mr. Travis can be a fan, for one gains the impression (possibly quite erroneous) that, in private life, his conversation is of the sub-edited order. Moreover, he describes the making of a *silent* movie and it is to be feared that he has only seen talkies which are like the windows of the Times Furnishing Company. He believes, too, that there is a perfect co-operation between the director, art-director, and cameraman. Readers of *Close Up* know that it is in Utopia alone that one may find an art-director who knows something about art, a director who knows something about the art-director, and a cameraman who is not blind to the world.

All this, of course, is terribly unfair. In his special sphere Mr. Travis is a model of efficiency. Premium bonus systems for electricians, the arrangement of ledgers for recording the payment of artistes (including columns for animals and their trainers); such things are the true province of the author.

His three books supply a definite demand. Economics of the kinematograph industry, from the accountancy and organisation point of view, have not yet been standardised. Until they have been we cannot hope that the industry will become stable, and that banks will agree to act as *angels*.

O. B.

KEEPING IT DARK OR THE CENSOR'S HANDBOOK.

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"Not a collection," say Bernard Causton and G. Gordon Young, the authors, "of tittering generalities *about* censorship, but an analysis of its actual working."

Well, we are always ready for a tilt against that august and venerable body—body is the word, for its functions go no higher. It is not, say the authors again, so much that the Puritan pioneer had an over-developed sense of sin but rather that he concentrated it upon one or two physical risks that threatened his material well-being. . . . Yes, *body is the word*, and Messrs. Causton and Young are not going to allow their readers to make any mistake about that. Why should they? Their analysis is astute, if a little Fabian in tone, but they leave the well-worn axe to grind itself, that is to say they do not howl with indignation, nor with heavy irony. Irony speaks for itself in the way they have marshalled some very interesting facts relative to the march of censorship—a sorry rampage of bewildered old gentlemen, not sure of what they want to suppress, but nothing daunted in their determination to suppress it! This we see, and this is all we need. The regrettable thing about attacks against the censors is the tendency to bemoan indecencies allowed to pass. Alas, these poor, neglected, isolated, small and neat indecencies! If only we, universally, had the guts to *be* indecent! We are never more than cliquey. And vice in our midst is the startled tinkering of maidenhood. Some thoroughly lawless bounders is what we need. Rebecca West adds a few trite truisms by way of foreword. Why?

K. M.

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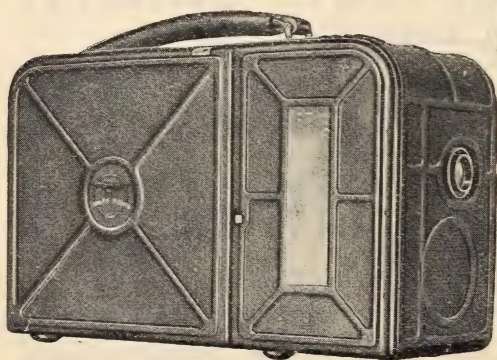
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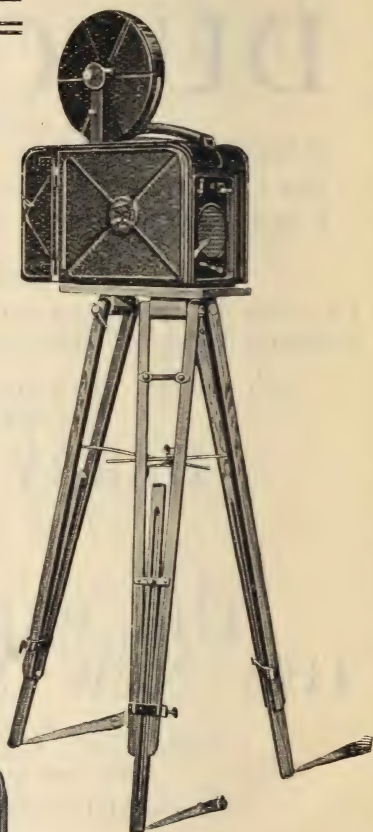
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RIANT CHATEAU . . . TERRITET . . . SWITZERLAND

LONDON OFFICE : 26 LITCHFIELD ST., CHARING CROSS RD., W.C.2

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AS IS

BY THE EDITOR.

When we go to a cinema in England to-day, as often as not it is a bewildering transmigration to some great outdoors. I mean, of course, the atmospheric cinema.

Here are roofs that are skies, walls that are pergolas, cloisters, palazzi, Tuscan hillscares, Old Madrid, Autumn in Cyprus, Spring in Corfu—a travelogue of worth and wonder, but relevant to lord knows not what, but not to cinema, indeed, as though—we are beginning to be aware—anything ever could be! No, sir! Not cinema, pure or impure, though sometimes we must pause to muse on this vague chimera and if we think we mean anything when we chatter about it, why should not a Corsican Spring-spa or something les Bains not be quite perfect cinema, when you think that in the middle of it all, beneath the changing plaster sky, in classic amphitheatre enclosure reminiscent of anything from the Theatre of Dionysus to the Hollywood Bowl, sits, chews, coughs, sleeps, fondles, and sees and hears a gathering of true believers? A solemn thought.

But in these fresh fields and pastures new no old dun cow may moo or miew, no Amaryllis do those sprightly things that Amarylli do do, no distant view of men who go down to the sea in chars-a-banc may raise the dust, no pleasant bird may chirp, duck waddle, fowl lay eggs, or bull give chase, no rain from out those rubicund suspicious skies dismiss us scampering to Tudor hot-dog counters. No, sir. No, sir. For we are there—you would never think it—to look in one direction—that small white space behind those huge magenta drapes. That space which alone remains undecorated. Why?

Is there any reason, quite seriously, why the screen itself should not have a little care and ingenuity expended on it; a pattern of something or other—foliage, a palm leaf, the chubby edge of an oleander, or thin and dusky silhouettes of tree trunks?

After all why not? Why on earth not? In the only perfect atmospheric theatre I have visited I could see perhaps one third of the screen if that. But what a third! And what it did to mere film, making it a—forgive me if I say “that other world,” that hocus-pocussy saturnalia in tango time, and then flame, white and silent as the sun, something fraught, if that is what I mean, with life caught unawares and from the outside in, or the other side up, and terribly, grandly vital and to be watched. Well, isn’t that, no matter what you may say, isn’t that the aim of the cinema we champion?

A word on the decor, of which the audience is so oddly a kind of keynote. This audience was something I could spy at, sniperishly. They sat and they behaved, I must say

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decorously and a little melodiously perhaps in the middle of their staggering decor. Palm trees flanked the screen. Not "palms" but trees thirty, forty, fifty feet high. Have I not already mentioned palm trees? And that oleander too that stroked the back of my neck. Spraying outwards in usual form, trees made a cup for the screen—pepper, rubber and eucalyptis, not one of them a common or garden tree in this so over-done scheme whose name must surely be An Old Casino Garden; and that Casino itself none other than the world's most famous—Monte Carlo, fabulous rococo triumph, completely a Hollywood conception of itself, if that means anything.

Overhead a sky of stars and prosperity moon, and a dim circle somewhere back of the trees of lighted trams and cars. A moving circle too! Imagine that! And imagine trying to focus attention on the film with all these rumbling, booming, tinkling, tooting horrors keeping up the *esprit* of the "scheme"—even to the extent of distant jazz, undoubtedly meant to come from some adjoining terrace of these stately grounds. As I say, imagine the impossibility of focussing attention and your imaginings are leading you astray.

Let me take you into my confidence and explain why I, a more or less hard-boiled movie-goer, should have so palpitated over a meek one-third of a screen. Then let me confess that mine was a cheating participation. I had no ticket. I had not paid. I had walked into and then stood in company with a sprinkling of well-behaved, similarly fraudulent fans, peeping through a chink between railings and tree-trunks. We were such law-abiding malefactors, such an orderly, charming audience. Particularly was my heart won

by an elderly dame in white squatting on her hams, and both hands simianly grabbing a railing. Silent, intent and enchanted! Our view was oblique and trees flared up and across the screen, so that the dazzling play of light behind them was imbued with odd intensity. There were the other lights. They were yellow-green and red too. But this. The amazing whiteness! One realised at once the abstract loveliness of cutting. Appreciations and perceptions that not any ten franc seat inside could possibly have given. Here was straight access to the Kingdom of the movie, and the enchanted glade this (enchanted certainly) quietly waving triumph of rare trees. Beyond, that avid, significant flame, soundless and swept with vigor. There was that in it which made us realize that not since childhood had we been stirred in just this way—that we had not received just this—and what, good gracious, was it? Cinema *pur*? Cinema among the trees, among the trams, under the moon—"real life"? Perhaps. Real life, should we say, with the something added instead of the something taken away. What an age since just that wonder, shock and joy came wholly, making one thing. What a *simple pleasure*! What one had forgotten and foregone in gaining—atmospheric cinemas! Yet here with its audience inside and its audience outside, and the life of that absurd old *fin-de-siecle* town going on all round, what were we doing but adding a little staring to our lives? As we might stare at that famous Dolly brace sweeping in to break the unbreakable Bank. Cinema was that—the staring I mean—with the, I wont say implications and I wont say obligations, and I wont say inhibitions—but something of the kind that makes us polite when we feel rude, and covert

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when we most need to gape—left right out, so that we were free to stare and wonder in beautiful innocence.

Not that this, far from it, pretends to plead for outdoor kinos. We have no summer nights like Monte Carlo's. Nor is it meant to point any moral except this—if we are to go atmospheric, aren't we losing a terrible lot by not being atmospheric of something? Even if not of cinema! This casual summer-garden was perfect—and, of course, quite limited. Because it linked the screen to, let us repeat, trams and railings and pavements and everthing. It made the finest sound film we shall have in years. And I would say this also: only myself and my fellow miscreants were the privileged. A night or two later I sat inside, and the glamour was gone. I mean the sense of balance. The kitschy film was dominant.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

FILMS AND THE LAW I SING

A note on the law governing the showing of films in
England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

A film society cannot go far without running up against the law, and in this case it is better to meet trouble half way than deplete the society's funds by making a handsome con-

tribution to the maintenance of the local police force. Hence the following notes may be of interest to those who have formed or who contemplate forming a film society.

First, as we all know, there are two kinds of film, the non-inflammable film used largely by amateurs in 9.5 mm. and 16 mm. machines, and the inflammable or ordinary commercial film. Thus the first questions a film society not having the use of a licenced hall is likely to ask are, (a) Can we show non-inflammable films? and (b) can we show inflammable films?

(a) *As to the showing of non-inflammable films.* The answer, as our Parliamentary friends would say, is in the affirmative. (They mean, yes, and so do I.) You may show non-inflammable films; but note that apparently films may be inflammable although they can be used in the cinematograph without taking fire. (*Victoria Pier (Folkestone) Syndicate Ltd. v. Reeve.* (1912) 76 J.P. 374). So far, so good, you say, but can the authorities in their all-seeing wisdom and solicitude for our well-being say our films are not suitable for exhibition and prevent us from showing them? The answer is not certain but it will probably depend on whether the showing of the film to the society could be said to be an exhibition to the public or not. But what is the public? Well, in the interesting case of *Duck v. Bates*, (1884) 13 Q.B.D. 487, it was held that the performance of a play to the nurses and students of Guy's Hospital and their friends was not a public performance. Presumably then, members of a limited class cannot be said to be the public. But if anyone can join your society simply by applying for membership and paying a subscription—be it one shilling or

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twenty-five—can it be said that you are members of a limited class? It is very doubtful. But how to get over the difficulty? Well, form yourselves into a private society, that is into one in which the prospective members must be proposed and seconded before they are elected. You will then probably be members of a limited class, and able to show any non-inflammable film with impunity. (Incidentally, this may explain the L.C.C.'s differentiation between the Film Society and the Workers' Film Society.)

(b) *As to the showing of inflammable films.* The answer to question (b) is by no means so simple. The law on the point is stringent, section 1 of the Cinematograph Act 1909 running as follows:

“ An exhibition of pictures or other optical effects by means of a cinematograph or other similar apparatus for the purposes of which inflammable films are used shall not be given unless the regulations made by the Secretary of State for securing safety are complied with, or save as otherwise expressly provided by this Act, elsewhere than in premises licenced for the purpose in accordance with the provisions of this Act.”

The point to note is that the Act prohibits every “ exhibition ” and not merely a public exhibition. Prima facie that shatters all hope, but the effect depends on the interpretation to be placed on the word “ exhibition.” Apparently the only judicial decision on the point was in the Attorney-General v. Vitagraph Company Ltd. (1915) 1 Ch. 206, where Astbury J. said, “ Having regard to the fact if I am right that there must be some limitation put upon the word “ Exhi-

bition," and that it cannot possibly be held to include every occasion on which a film is run through a cinematograph machine, I think I ought to construe the Act as relating to places of public entertainment where an exhibition of a cinematograph picture takes place . . ." In that case it was held that the word "exhibition" did not include the case of a dealer bona fide and in his trade of selling and renting out films running them through the machine, although he did so in the presence of one or more customers. That decision is clearly favourable to the view that to show films to a private society is not to "exhibit" them; but in another case which came before a London police court (whose value as an authority would not equal that of the Chancery Division of the High Court) it was held that cinematograph exhibition given at a hospital in connection with lectures at a medical congress infringed the Act, but the point that it was not an exhibition within the meaning of the Act does not appear to have been raised as the defence was conducted by a layman. (Re National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic, (1913) *Times*, October 11.) That appears to be the law as it now stands, and perhaps shortly we may find a society public-spirited enough to get themselves prosecuted to settle the point. But for a Society that wants to go warily, it is better not to exhibit inflammable films (the maximum penalty for doing so is £20) except as mentioned later.

Section 7 (2) of the same Act which creates an important exception reads as follows :

"Where the premises in which it is proposed to give such an exhibition as aforesaid are premises used occasion-

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ally and exceptionally only, and not on more than six days in any one calendar year, for the purpose of such exhibition it shall not be necessary to obtain a licence for those premises under this Act if the occupier thereof has given to the County Council and the chief officer of the police area, not less than seven days before the exhibition notice in writing of his intention to use the premises, and complied with the regulations made by the Secretary of State under this Act, and subject to such regulations with any conditions imposed by the County Council and notified to the occupier in writing."

The effect of this is that a society may hold an exhibition after giving due notice to the County Council and the chief officer of the police area on not more than six days in any one year subject to complying with the regulations made by the Secretary of State and the conditions (if any) imposed by the County Council. Most societies, however, might find it difficult to comply with the regulations of the Secretary of State—particularly with regard to the operating chamber—and the conditions imposed by the County Council might be prohibitive, but the provision is worth remembering if you can ever get a suitable building.

Another very important exception is created by section 7 (4) of the Act which reads thus :

" This Act shall not apply to an exhibition given in a public dwellinghouse to which the public are not admitted whether on payment or otherwise."

This presents a further loophole for the ingenious. It might not be wise to hire a room in a private dwellinghouse,

though it might come within the section, and that same public-spirited society may care to try it, but if a member of your society were to be so kind as to invite his friends, the other members of the society to come to his house to see some films, then probably all would be well, although the society might itself have hired the films and paid all expenses. That too is worth remembering.

But where is that public-spirited society?

I. M. BANNER MENDUS.

THE KINO OLYMPIAD : MOSCOW

Left London in midst of continued battle with the Censor and others over showing of Russian films, and arrived in Moscow just in time to see a collected programme of thirty Soviet films! Being a student of the State Institute of Cinematography, Moscow, entails certain privileges, among which is entrance to all cinemas at reduced rates. Average cost of show is 50 kopecks to a rouble, as student get in for 25 kopecks. The Olympiad, however, was a special festival to which I had a season ticket for everything. Its purpose was to show to the people of Moscow (and incidentally to the delegates of the Communist Congress taking place at same time) all the cinema and theatre and art activities of the rest of the Soviet Union. For the first time fourteen of the largest

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national groups in the Union were represented at the festival. Nearly all of them have their own theatre organizations, twelve have film producing units, so far. All these are now unified under the Soviet United Kino (COUZKINO). These are Russian proper :

Couzkino (Moscow and Leningrad—Soukino) and *Meschra-boom*.

Ukraine : VUFKU.

White Russia : BELGOSKINO.

Eastern S.S.R. (Asia) : VOSTOKINO and KINO-SIBIER.

Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan : UZBEKINO and TURKMENKINO.

Georgia : GRYZGOSKINPROM.

Armenia and Aizerbaijan : AZGOSKINO and ARMENKINO and CHOUVASHKINO.

Of the thirty films shown by these at the Olympiad, I managed to see twenty three in one month ! And in the eight weeks I have been here (it seems ages) have seen in all forty five films, including English, American, Japanese, German, sound and silent. One of these was *Intolerance* by D. W. Griffiths, and another the curiously named film by Jukichi Sudzuki *What Makes Her Thus* or more fully *What has caused her to be in such a position ?* These must be dealt with separately, now I will concentrate on Soviet films.

Leaving out the seven already dealt with in *Close Up* (i.e., *Mother*, *Ghenghis Khan*, *C.B.D.*, *New Babylon*, *Turksib*, *Man Movie Camera*, *Mechanics of Brain*) we have left twenty five, which I will classify thus :

DRAMAS : 1. Old (Russian) Style. 2. New (Russian) Style.

DRAMA-DOCUMENTAL :

CHRONICLES :

EDUCATIONAL :

DRAMAS 1.

Revenge. AZARMENKINO.

Regisseur Amo Bek-Nazarov.

An early film of this section. Melodramatic story of unrequited love, where all die in the end like a Shakespearan tragedy. A national legendary tale in modern setting having all the similarities with other such dramas of classic lore. There were too many titles, showing its obvious adaptation from a book. The one thing of note is the producer's handling of a volcanic eruption at beginning of film, which for a new kino company was very well done and could easily compare with U.S.A. in realism! This producer's later film *House on Volcano* has a similar catastrophe of a great fire, which was remarkably realistic. So that such happenings appear to be Bek-Nazarov's *forte*. His later film however has definite tendency and deals with a part of the class-struggle, and is much better.

Comet. VOSTOKINO.

Reg. and Scenarist : V. I. Inkishinov

Operator : V. Franzison.

A rather stupid story of the fear of a comet crashing into



A page of Little Ones—alike in gaze and temperament! Above, *Buschi*, a seven months' old orangoutang in an Ufa Kulturfilm of the same name, and below the diminutive Esquimo gourmets have not a care in the world when their breakfast of fish-oil is set before them.

From *Greenland Glimpses*.



Photos: Ufa



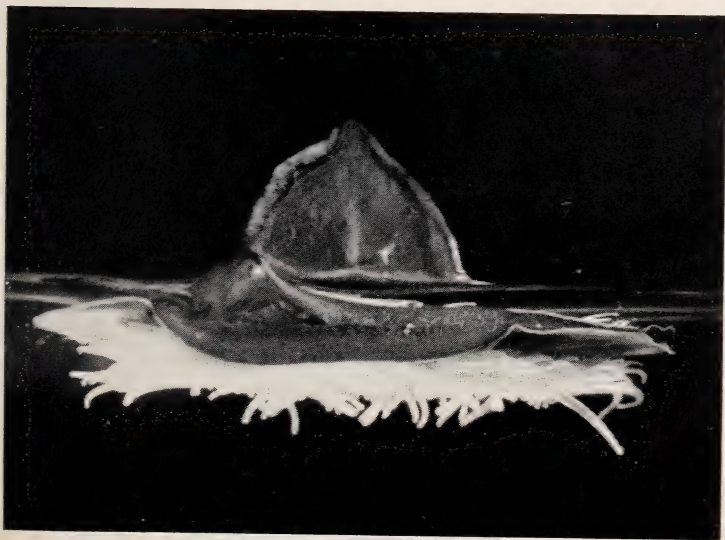
From the popular Ufa *Creatures of Crystal*, a fascinating documentaire of the transparent creatures of the sea. Above, Salpa, belonging to the family of tunicates, and below, the Venus girdle, a ribbon-shaped, vertebrate jelly-fish.



Photos: Ufa



Further *Creatures of Crystal*. Above, the sailing jelly-fish *Velella*, and below, the sea snail *Atlanta*.





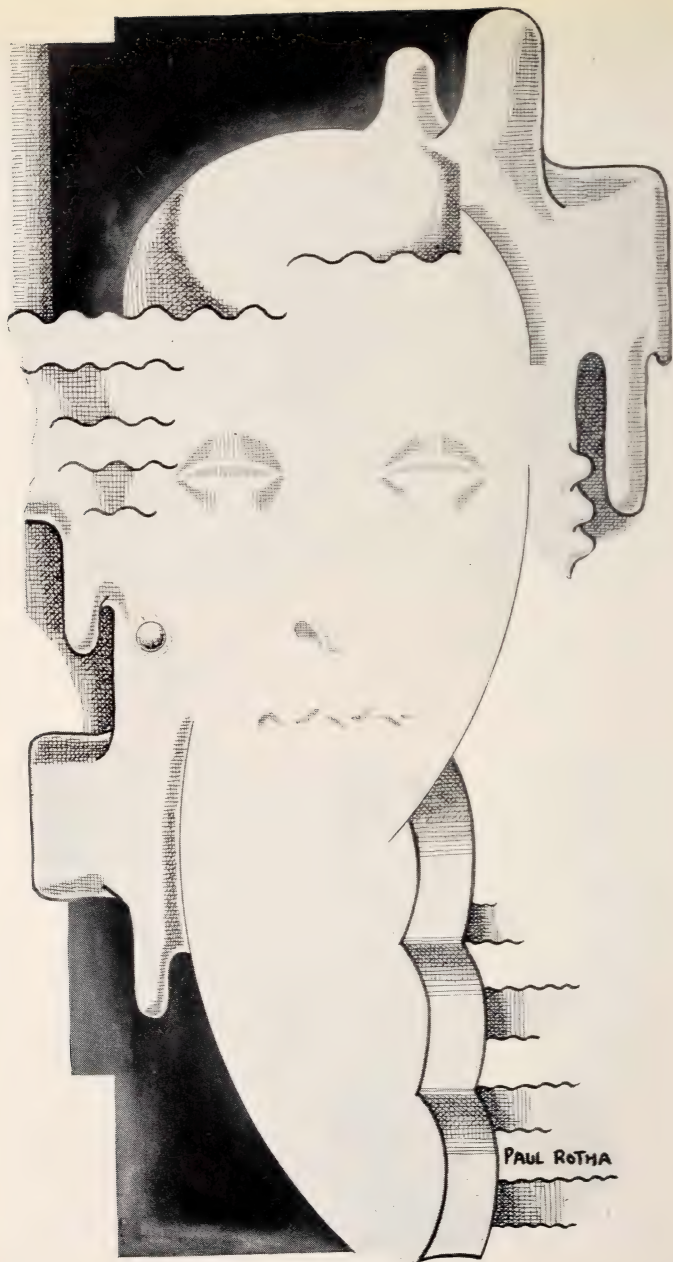
From a new film by Henri Storck, *Life Savers of the Belgian Coast*,
a document of 700 metres.



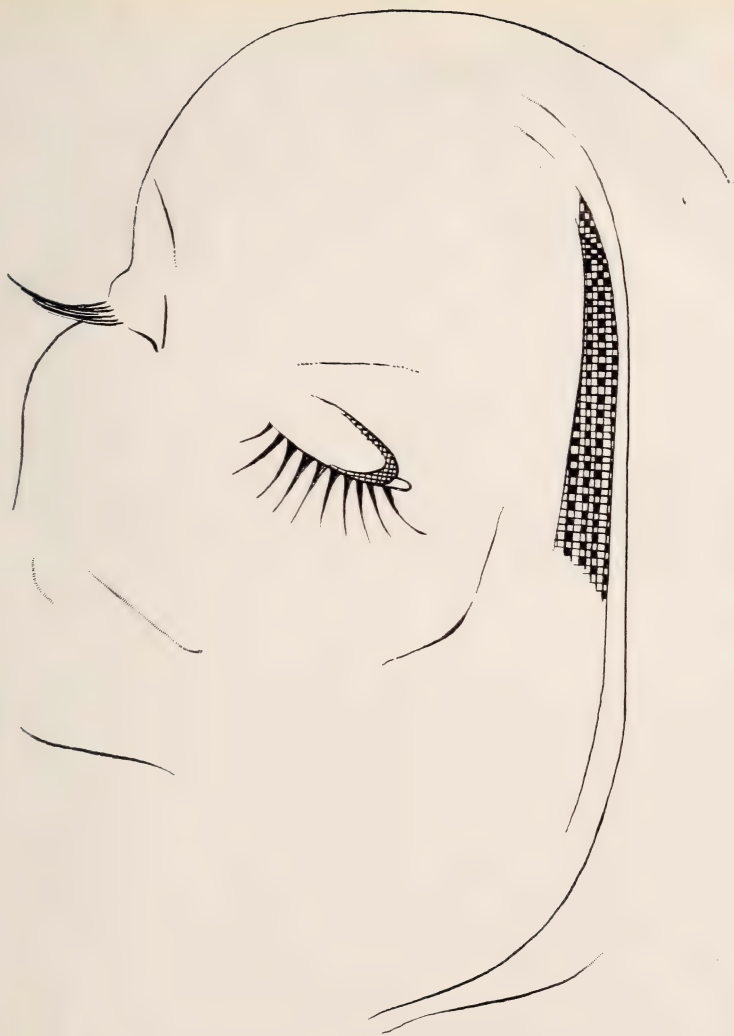


M. G. M. Barkies. A new series of comedies. Jiggs, above, as the detective Phido Vance in *The Dogville Murder Mystery* or *Who killed Rover*. Below, rehearsal of the Front Line chorus in the Bark and Dance show, *Dogway Melody*.





Paul Rotha's rendering of Greta Garbo. This blew up a storm of argument, the outcome of which was...



... as above, a design submitted by one of the junior members of the staff—the Editor. Both are printed without comment, but readers will no doubt prefer their own.



Photos: Richee

Marlene Dietrich, the German star who has gone to Hollywood to make talking films for Paramount. These portraits are printed by courtesy of Paramount.

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the earth, and the advantages taken of this by certain individuals, and one woman in particular who freed herself of her husband. Interesting in that the types were Tartars and Mohammedans, and the scenes were Eastern. The producer was the Mongol in Pudowkin's film *Heir of Ghengis Khan*, it does not appear from this film that he has any talent in producing.

DRAMAS 2. New (Russian) Style.

Zimla (Earth). VUFKU.

Reg. and Scenario : A. Dovszhenko.

Rich waving corn, cloud shadows moving in the wind, great open skies, growth of fruit, sunflowers and a sunflower maiden, luscious apples on heavy laden trees, ripe for the fall. On the thick grass in the orchard an old man is lying, white and beautiful with age. He is smiling at three people standing around him, waiting, their dark hair contrasting with his whiteness. "Son—I am dying," peacefully the watch, the very young man with clean shaven face, the father with dark beard and wife buxom on the grass, two young children play. "Yes . . . but you must die," the reply is as natural as the ripe apples and the corn and the children as they watch the old man's smile. "For 75 years have I ploughed the earth." "Father, if I were a Commisar I would give you an Order for that," but the grandson interjects. "They don't give Orders for that." "For what do they give them then? . . ." but the old man holds out his hand. "I should like something to eat. Give me an apple," and as he slowly eats the ripe fruit another old man, unobstrusive in the background,

comes forward. "Brother, promise to tell me where you have gone if you can, so I may come too. . . ." The dying man smiles and nods, and falls slowly back. Dead. The children are nibbling at ripe apples, the sunflowers and the fruit are growing.

Crying faces of women, angry Kulaks, resisting collectivisation. One tries to kill his horse, but is stopped by his son. There is a great meeting in the village, all crowding under great white sky. In the lone cemetery old man kneels by grave of his friend. "Brother, are you there?" and he listens, ear to earth. "Good health, grandfather" comes the reply . . . from three children hiding behind another grave. The crowd increases, ploughman stops horse to watch, three cows watch, three kulaks, all chewing. All watch road that leads over skyline. On which appears figures marching, and in the middle, IT! Crowd rushes. The TRACTOR has come! It stops. Kulaks deride "STOPS!" others "IT GOES!" Men try to push it. Then driver finds radiator empty. No water anywhere. "Did you drink well at the last village?" he asks of his company. And they fill the radiator. "IT GOES!" At Collective centre: report that tractor has stopped. The Tractor MUST NOT STOP, is reply. "IT GOES!" Triumphant enters village. "FACT" admits one kulak. Driver addresses crowd as to what it can do. Kulaks jeer. "WATCH" . . . "WE BEGIN." Then the machine is plowing, raking, sowing, reaping, threshing, sorting, breadmaking, machines over beasts. The leader of village Communists, the dead man's grandson, is triumphant. His work bears fruit. Then when work is done, twilight comes, lovers walk, older ones to

CLOSE UP

bed, mists creep, darkness falls. Grandson and his love at last have to part. And along the lane he comes home, strong with love and completed work. His joy bubbles over, he begins to stamp the dust, he dances, DANCES, dancing man and dancing dust. Then suddenly he collapses limp to the ground, still. A horse starts with fear in the dark, and in the distance a white figure is running, running away. Only the dust dances. Night.

The father is sitting with bowed head, by his dead son. Knock comes to door, all look up. News of murderer? But it is only a priest. "It's no good now," the father says, "and you too are no good now." The priest goes back to his empty church. "Bury him in the New Way" father says to head of village Soviet. "Without priests or acolytes," and so only a singing crowd escort him to his grave. But the older women fearfully cross themselves muttering "God save us, without priests or crosses!" But the people go singing on. Pass ripening sunflower fields. A pregnant woman labours in travail. Priest totters round his empty church and barren ikons. Youth sings. The open coffin almost seems to float along. The dead face is brushed by apple-laden branches. "Strike them God!" priest cries to ikons. And a white figure of kulak is seen running across the fields. The baby is being born. Sunflowers growing. The body of the dead moves on. Life is singing. Priest muttering. Kulak running amok, twisting his head round and round in the earth. "Strike!" says priest. "This is *my* earth," cries the white kulak. "MINE." But the fruit grows, babies are born, sunflowers grow, men and women sing, the dead go on. The Kulak hears them coming nearer. He rushes to cemetery,

between the crosses, towards them, crying "I killed him." The procession moves on, they do not hear him. "I killed him at night," he shouts. Still they sing. "At night when he danced like this!" and he too dances among the graves. There the dying living and the living dead. But no one hears him. They are listening to a speaker on the new life. "He died on the dawn of a new life." "He died for the dawn."

Then comes the rain and lovely fruit and trees are made yet more beautiful by the silver rain brushed with the wind. Corn, apples, melons, fruit, shine, as the rain ceases, triumphant nature.

Function.—In contrast to the majority of Soviet films and to Dovzhenko's last film *Arsenal* this is a meditative film. A philosophical meditation on the immutability of nature. Nature grows, man dies, is born, struggles, dies, part of that greater Nature. Death is even more beautiful than life when it is of the rightly lived. Theoretically this film is not of strict Communist ideology, it is rather the resignation and acceptance by man of immortal immutable Nature. Fear no death. "Yes, but you must die" is said quite calmly. Deep-meaning too is the old man's request, not for an "Order" but "something to eat."

The original film had two other threads which were cut out by the Censor. But are of great interest in that they emphasise more strongly the philosophy of the film. One part is that of the Lover of the dead man who when she heard of it in her room, tears off her cloths and goes "berserk" with sorrow, deep animal sorrow, the cry for a lost mate. And the other is the end, where this girl is in the arms of another man; nature consoles herself always with the living. (Reminiscent

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of part of Sean O'Casey's play *The Silver Tassie*.) It is not really tragic, it is just life, nature immortal. Another part too that will probably be cut out is the filling of the radiator by the men. Interesting attempt to link up man organically with his machines. They grow from each other, part of a Whole.

Form.—Due to its meditative quality it tended to still-ness of action, that at times seem suspiciously photographic and not cinematic. The "suspended action" of *Arsenal* was here almost "non-action." The fact that Dovzhenko was once a painter may help to explain this tendency. The shots of the fruit are the most beautiful I have seen. Several continuing compositions were interesting: a ploughman between two cows, and the driver between two great tractor wings, but the contrasts of cows and people has been done before! But to me undoubtedly the loveliest moment in the film is when the apple-laden branches brush the face of the dead man in his coffin. Here death really *was* beautiful. Throughout the compositions of narrow earth and wide expanse of skies gave the impression of nature over all. But, and here is an important point, Nature in its best clothes. Bedecked with jewelry. Nature in one mood.

An original and beautiful film. The man that can make two such divergent films as *Arsenal* and *Earth* is a master to be studied. The subject of his next will be DNIEPRESTROY, which will be when completed the largest electric power station in the world, with *Turk-Sib* the pride of the Five-Year plan thus far achieved. With such variety of subjects can one wonder at the versatility of the Soviet cinema?

Arsenal has been dealt with in *Close Up* as also has a *Stump of an Empire* so that it will be unnecessary for me to touch on

them. Except to note that the version of Mr. Blakeston in the January, 1930, number contained two errors. Without titles it was very difficult to understand the film and its meaning in the subtler points in which the film abounded.

NOTES ON O. B.'S REPORT.—He did not realise that the woman in the train was Filiminof's *Wife*, that puts all the rest into perspective, why his memory came back, the links that gradually fit in, the sewing machine that becomes a machine gun, the bell and cigarette box links, war memories. The woman who questions him is *not* his wife, but a woman who took him in after war to help as a sort of "general," he doesn't leave her to *lose* his old memories, but to search for his wife now his memory has come back. And the letter he takes in the end is a ruse of a friend who finds out it is his wife, who has married again! He does not "see himself as officer with the dog, etc," but sees the new husband as such, in other words stumps of an Empire, to which his wife still clings. So he goes to the new, alone.

H. P. J. MARSHALL.

(*To be continued.*)

NEWS OF THE SOVIET CINEMA

At a conference of the All-Union Electrotechnical Alliance a resolution was accepted providing for the construction of a special plant to manufacture electrotechnical fittings for sound apparatus. Apparatus will be produced on two systems, Shorin and Tager.

A large motion picture exhibition was set up in St. George's Hall of the Kremlin Palace on the occasion of the 16th Party Congress. The material of the exhibition embraced the following questions: how the Five Year Plan of the film industry is arranged, how the soviet cinema is reaching the masses, how our films are received abroad, how the bourgeoisie uses the motion to its own ends, etc. In striking statistics, in easily-comprehensible drawings, models and photographs, the exhibition sets forth answers to these questions. The educational film department of the Sovkino issued films, especially to coincide with the Congress, on the following subjects: the purging of the soviet apparatus, the struggle for the fulfilment of the industrial-financial plan, the bolshevist sowing campaign, the purging and growth of the party, and the situation of the labourer in various countries.

BRINGING THE MOTION PICTURE INTO THE MUSEUM

In order to bring the cinema into the museums of Leningrad and its suburbs, a display of montage rolls of motion

pictures under the general title of *War as represented by the masters of the cinema* was set up at the "War and Art" exhibition in the Russian Museum. At Peterhof in the Lower Palace—the summer residence of the Romanovs—a series of extracts from old news-reels depicting the life of Nicholas II and his family are being shown.

At the exhibition "The Imperialist War and the Revolution," which is taking place in the Peterhof Park, not far from the Farm Cottage and which is laid out in those historical railroad cars in one of which Nicholas Romanov signed his abdication from the throne, a motion picture theatre seating two hundred has been constructed. Here news-reels of the war, dating from 1914-17, will be shown.

A general autonomous bureau for photographic and motion picture import and export, "Intorgkino," was formed in April of this year, and functions as a state monopoly. All motion picture organisations within the boundaries of the U.S.S.R. (the Mezhrabpomfilm, the cinema organisations of the allied republics, etc.) carry on the import and export of materials, equipment and so on, only through the Intorgkino. The Peoples' Commissariat for Trade has given the Intorgkino the right to regulate photo and cinema import and export and the power of granting license.

THE SOVIET HOLLYWOOD.

The construction of this gigantic cinema plant was begun in the autumn of 1928. 12,500,000 rubles have been assigned for its construction. The plant is scheduled to be completed toward the end of the Five Year Period, in 1933. The most important structures are being given first consideration, and

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work on them is being carried on at forced speed. Thus, for instance, the main building—the studio—with all its subordinate departments (cameramen's rooms, directorial and scenario offices, photographic laboratory, scenery-painting shop, etc.) will be completed toward the end of the current season—in the autumn of 1930.

The studio is already partially finished, is being equipped and will be ready for use at the end of August 1930. The entire plant, moreover, will be equipped during the winter of 1930-31 and will be ready for use as a whole by the spring of 1931, that is to say months earlier than the date called for in the plan.

Such is the case with the second largest construction programme, that for two laboratories for productive and mass work respectively. It had been planned to lay their foundations next season, that is in the spring of 1931, the buildings were to have been completed by 1932, and the equipment was to have been ready by the autumn of 1932. In fact, however, the construction of the laboratories has been begun, is going on, and will be finished by autumn 1930. In the winter of 1930-31 the laboratories will be fitted out and with the spring of 1931 they will begin to function. According to plan the instalment of electrical equipment was to have been begun in 1929 and finished in 1930; actually it was begun in 1930 and will be finished in 1930. The warehouse for the storing of negatives, a building of extremely complicated construction, will be finished this year, instead of in 1931.

On the whole 50 per cent. of the construction programme has already been carried out in two working seasons, without increasing the number of workmen or the financial estimates.

The giant factory will be a cinema-town at the end of the Five Year Plan, with a population of thousands of workers. Fifty five acres of land lying across the river Setun, opposite the factory, have already been set aside as a site for workers' homes. The construction of dwelling houses has already been begun, but its development at full speed will begin next year. Construction is continually being extended—the Five Year Plan has been made to include, over and above the original programme, the building of a town of pavilions for the production of sound films on the territory of the cinema factory, a special building for the offices of the Moscow department of the Sovkino, a special building for the University of the Cinema, a dormitory for students, etc. All the buildings of the factory are planned with greatest consideration for the comfort of the workers, in order that their labour may be as efficient as possible. According to the reports of many specialists, both Soviet and foreign, the new Cinema Factory will be one of the best in the world as regards the technique of its equipment.

In the laboratory of Engineer Shorin sound records are being made of the first sound programme of the White Russian State Cinema, composed of White Russian, Polish and Jewish songs; and also of music performed on popular instruments by virtuosi specially brought over from White Russia for this purpose. The second part of this programme is made up of speeches by White Russian political and social workers on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of White Russia's freedom from the White Poles. These speeches were recorded during the sessions of the 16th party congress.

The VUFKU (All-Ukrainian Photo-Cinema Administra-

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tion) has finished photographing the film *Features of Contemporary Surgery*, for which the following operations have been filmed: trepanation of the skull, cancer operation, resection of the stomach, transfusion of blood, and X-Ray treatment. The filming took place under the supervision of Professor Silberberg and Doctor Lyubarski.

In Moscow a conference was held dealing with the re-organisation of Soviet film advertising technique. Addresses were heard on the following subjects: "Perspective of the Moving Picture Advertisement" and "What sort of Motion Advertising Should Soviet Russia Have?" In the resolution adopted after these addresses the fact was emphasised that the Soviet film advertisement was to be basically an educational work connected with the cinema. The conference adopted a number of measures for the reform of motion picture advertising.

The instalment of apparatus in the newly fitted out sound studio of the Leningrad Cinema Studio has been completed.

Work has been commenced on the mounting of the sound film *Alone*. Directors, G. Kozintsov and L. Trauberg, cameraman, Moskvín; artist, Yenei; composer, D. Shostakovich (author of the opera *The Nose*, after Gogol's tale). All outdoor shots taken in Ciratia (Altai).

At the plant of the Mezhrabpom (International Workers') film work has been begun on the photography of the art-film *The Song*, directed by Gendelstein. In the picture is brought up the question of art as a hindrance to the toilers in their struggle, and of art aiding proletariat—of the indispensibility of bringing "pure art" imprisoned by ancient traditions,

near to the modern observer, to the massed millions of toilers, the builders of socialism. The film will be part talking, part sound.

The mounting of the film *Igdenbu* has been finished. The director is Bek-Nazarov, the cameraman Bloom. The film was made in the far east and depicts the life of the tribe of the Golds.

At the Leningrad studio the film *The Sleeping Beauty*, after the scenario of G. Alexandrov, has been finished. The *mise en scene* is by directors S. and G. Vasiliev. The subject is the rôle of art in the period of reconstruction.

Director Esfir Shub has finished the mounting of the film *Today*. Into the film have entered fragments of material shot in the most important commercial centres of the U.S.S.R. and news reel material taken during the last few years in Western Europe, America and the colonies.

Director O. Preobrazhenskaya, creator of the film *The Women of Ryazan*, has finished work on the film *The Silent Don*, after the well-known novel of M. Sholokhov. In the main rôles are the players Zessarskaya Podgorny and others.

On the invitation of the cinema section of VOKS Mr. Ipppei Fukuro, the editor of the Japanese motion picture magazine *Cinema-Dziumpo*, visited the U.S.S.R. In connection with his arrival *Voks* arranged a series of lectures and previews of Japanese films of recent release (the film *How Did She Get That Way?* by the director Sudzuki and the Japanese animated cartoon "Chio Janii" (that is, pictures not drawn, but snipped out of coloured paper), the work of the artist Ofudzi. Addresses were read by Professor Kim and Konrad. Mr. Fukuro is the author of the Japanese translations of the

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scenario of the film *The Ghost That Never Returns* and of Eisenstein's conclusion to the book *The Japanese Cinema*. This translation and also the lectures given by Fukuro in the University of Tokio, have evoked great interest among Japanese cinema men, and particularly among a group of students who are studying the art of the cinema, and who sent with Mr. Fukuro a special letter to director Eisenstein. In the letter this group of students at the University of Keio asks Eisenstein to send them all the articles he has ever written on the theory of the motion picture, since they wish to publish them in a separate book as a reference work for students. They likewise assert that Eisenstein's conclusion to the book *The Japanese Cinema* inspired them to begin the study analysis of the technique of Japanese Feudal Art.

E. Lemberg's book *The Cinema Industry of the U.S.S.R.* (The Economics of Soviet Cinematography) has just been published by the Tea-Kino Pechat (Theatre and Motion Picture Publishing House) with a foreword by Y. Larin. The book is a detailed analysis of the U.S.S.R.'s cinema market, with an account of all its peculiarities, and throws light on the question of cinema import and export. A special section is devoted to the cinema productions of the republics of the national minorities. The price of the book is 5 rubles.

Director Vinitsky and cameraman Rona (Wufku) are working on the scientific film *Man and Monkey*. The film deals with the theory of evolution of species from the Marxist point of view. The Communist Academy and the Moscow Institute of Darwinism are being consulted in connection with the film. The shots are being made in the ape menagerie at Sukhum.

P. A.

ATTITUDE AND INTERLUDE

OR, CONTEMPORARY CINEMA ARCHITECTURE IN THE LIGHT
OF BUNYAN'S *Pilgrim's Progress*.

We have lately, said he, adopting his best impersonal style, been interesting ourselves in the evolution of an attitude. There is nothing unusual in this. We are always interested in the evolution of something or other. Until it has evolved.

That is the drawback of an attitude. The moment it becomes a philosophy it ceases to matter, as we may take it no sensible person is interested in anything except making money these days.

A chastening thought, explaining as it does the terrible struggle between Art and Commerce now raging at Elstree.

Besides, an attitude, as St. Paul the Apostle remarked so wittily, is just another excuse for theology. There is really no excuse for attitudinising in self-defence these days; a cold compress on the nape of the neck will prove more efficacious. And so much less worrying mentally. Or again, as Queen Lizzy remarked to the Adjectival Mary, what's in an attitude?

Have you ever, said he, adopting the direct attack style so much favoured by newspaper magnates, felt the total in-

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adequacy of words as a means of expression? Have you ever realised how we live in a word-bound world of literary limbo? You have? Right, Sir, yours is an attitude.

Incidentally, if such is the unhappy case, and your suppressed desires gasp for fresh mediums of expression, we may make any or all of three deductions.

Either you are such a thick-headed, illiterate, ill-kempt idiot that you do not understand your own language, or you are a genuine artist, in which case may the Lord have mercy on your soul and overdraft, or you are just another of those muddle-headed half-wits who think round the unfamiliar sides of a rectangle, like a taxi-driver airing his knowledge of London by taking the backstreets and the short cuts with one eye on the meter and the other on the longest way round the short side of a circle. No doubt you have noticed the high percentage of squinting taxi-drivers.

Is that clear, brief, concise, pithy? Get me, Steve?

Cinema is the modern attitude. That means, it is so much less disconcerting than a complete theory. It supplies no answer; it merely gives an excuse. It is the unfinished fragment of the modern development, the work in progress of the experimentalist, the dimpled dumpling of the dubious dabbler in dazzling developments.

Cinema's attitude is the world attitude. Sad, but true.

We have recently been intellectually stimulated by the Three Greatest Talking Pictures on record. (The first World's Greatest for nearly a week). These films are regarded as the answer to the critics' prayer, the ultimate eye-piece of artistic endeavour, the culminating jewel in the fair

diadem of creative inspiration, and the latest excuse for the British papers to show how worthless is their standard of patriotic criticism.

The three jolly little jack tars in question are *Two Worlds*, *The Yellow Mask*, and *Murder*.

Now let us understand the situation clearly. *Two Worlds* was described in solid print by the *Daily Mail*, that bulwark of the intelligentsia, as the greatest of talking pictures. *The Yellow Mask* was variously described as anything from good entertainment to a terrific box-office smash. *Murder* was laid down by the *Sunday Express*, that house organ of the Exclusive Cult of James Douglas the Deep Thinker, as the latest picture by one of the greatest film geniuses living.

Now it happened that these three films, shown in the order mentioned, improved in that same order. So let us consider 'em that way.

And now, Gentlemen—confound it! The same slip again—what would we, the discerning patrons, the light of intellectual fire, the eternal worshippers of the plastic muse, have to say about them?

That is printable, I mean.

Well, perhaps we would let *Two Worlds* down lightly by saying that as a work of art it was very good popular entertainment. As a contribution to living! Well, ever read a 1916 Bradshaw?

The worst of cinema, it is the attitude of the thoughtless interlude.

We might say of *The Yellow Mask* that it was the mixture as before, only more so. And we might say of *Murder* that it is the best of British films to date.

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In considering *Two Worlds* there is one point one must clear up. I take it we do not mind a film being bad when it never pretends to be anything else. We forgive the Brothers Warner. They do not attempt to make artistic masterpieces. They have their attitude; we have ours. But we do condemn a film which tries to be artistic and misses the mark.

Two Worlds, briefly, might be regarded as being neither of this world nor the next. Spiritualism, another of those Post-War attitudes which is in danger of becoming a philosophy, sometimes postulates seven spiritual planes outside the earth, each one deeper in sympathy than the one beneath. Meet the Eighth Plane. Mr. Dupont.

And now, warming into our stride and adopting the lightly satirical style—styles are so helpful to the scribbler—*Two Worlds* is just the cutest little thing of all time. Its story, probing the psychological profundities of the universe, sweeping the whole panorama of human emotion, delving into the very fundamentals of our being, tells how a handsome Austrian officer during the war falls in love with a Jewess whose father he has illtreated for military purposes. The old man, however, helps him out of a scrape by pretending he is his son, and the girl falls in love with him, and the wicked Russians seek after him in vain, and the boy's father comes back and hears he wants to marry the girl, and says he mustn't, and he says he will, and he threatens to have the father arrested if he does, and he gives in and doesn't, and the girl throws a faint throws a faint throws a faint, and the father does glycerine stuff, and the handsome boy goes off to war leaving the girl he left behind him behind him behind him.

Is that clear? I rather thought not.

Well, well, well. It is a terrible thing, studying the attitude of others. One's own is sufficient of a nuisance.

All this, mark ye, to the tune of much Jewish religious ritual, an undress scene, and some frightfully-plastic-most-iconoclastic camera angles. Meanwhile the world turns on in the lathe of time and the dark lands heave amain, and we find a joke in the Dupont smoke which will never come back again.

Photography? Picture postcard. Individually good, no sense of unification.

Direction? E. A. Dupont.

Perhaps British International will make money out of *Two Worlds*; one never knows. It seems strange. But then everything seems strange. It is a world of misapplied superlatives and hopelessly valueless values.

The attitude of the commercial cinema; the complete negativeness, the lack of interest. Sterility and defeatism.

And so to *The Yellow Mask*. Why a mask, anyway? And why this film? It is curious; Lachman is the naughty boy of the studios, the man who might do a good job if left alone. Instead he does *The Yellow Mask*, which as a contribution to contemporary cinema means as much as a third class sleeper to the seclusion-loving dabbler in the arts.

It is unfair to criticise this film, just as it was unfair to expect anyone to make a good job of it. For the first time I understood why folks made such a fuss of that Johnson girl.

She flew from England.

By the way, have you cracked that one about the difference between Amy, Al, and yourself? The first are Flying and Singing Fools respectively.

Yellow Mask will make money. Let us hold it to the

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director's eternal credit that he has assessed its value pretty closely.

And thus to *Murder*. Hitchcock by now must be an admitted authority on the black arts, having graduated with *Blackmail*.

Hitchcock, of course, is an interesting phenomenon, said he, adopting the quietly introspective style. A rambler rose on an arctic slope. Or perhaps it would be better to say a walrus on Everest. He has his moments. He is the one man in this country who can think cinema. He may never achieve half of what he thinks. One cannot expect too much of the British industry. Indeed, one expects nothing of any attitude, even one's own.

But Hitchcock's moments justify themselves. Obviously *Murder* had its moments. It may not achieve real unity, but it comes nearer than any of its homemade competitors. And after *Two Worlds!*

There is a suggestion in *Murder* of a talk-film idea which personally has appealed to me from the start of the dialogue film. Too much, in my opinion, is made of the deliberate distortion of sound to make a counterpoint to the visual rhythm. For myself, I have always been interested in the direct linking of sound and picture by the employment of a literary translation in the dialogue of a similar rhythm as is used in the montage.

In this way a speeding of development with a very considerable increase in dramatic content can be obtained cinematically. While we are box-office bound we are justified in attempting compromise.

In the jury sequence in *Murder* Hitchcock has discovered

this same idea. The acceleration of cutting, coupled with the dialogue rhythm, speeding up, speeding up. Speech montage. So much more fundamental than that psychologically interesting " Knife " episode in *Blackmail*.

Much could be said about Hitchcock, his use of the detached camera. Documentation. His efforts to weld literary satire into cinematic development, the old fault for which Lubitsch has to answer. His idea-fertility, the use of dialogue as a thought-medium—a throwback to the Elizabethan stage, this.

Anyway, Hitchcock gives the screen ideas, in which it is so bankrupt. *Murder* has several ideas, flung off, used to serve a purpose and then forgotten.

Regarded as a motion picture *Murder* is a praiseworthy effort, quite the best thing this country has done. Looked at from the straightforward angle of the film-goer it gets dangerously near the highbrow, which means to say that the fact it has brains may militate against it.

Its literary link is too strongly noticeable. Too much footage is occupied with the novelists' preoccupation regarding the psychology of crime. There is much too much of the stuff that Clemence Dane is made of.

The evolution of an attitude. The surprise that someone's cinematic attitude may be worthwhile. The problem as to whether Hitchcock's attitude is compatible with the film-goers'.

We have lately, said he, adopting his best impersonal style, been interesting ourselves in the evolution of an attitude.

And in most cases much has been found wanting.

HUGH CASTLE.

CHECK-UP ON TECHNIQUE

“ At least I know where I am standing ! ”

Anyone who says that apropos modern cinema means he is standing still. News, in the journalist's sense of the word, comes from America by every post. Surrounded with the contents of the mail-bag for the last six months, one cannot help doubts ; still, this seems to be the most needful précis :

The “ negative microphone ” indicates that sound-proofed studios may be a luxury. When sounds are made near two microphones, one mike gets a larger share of the signal than the other ; unless, of course, the sounds occur at calculated distances. But, sounds travelling from a distance reach microphones, which are reasonably near apart, with equal intensity. The further away the sound is and the closer together the microphones are, the more accurate is the approximation. . . These two facts form, roughly, the theory on which the system of “ negative microphone ” is based.

A director, let us suppose, is rehearsing a scene not far from a main road. The background noises of the road (especially when a tram passes) might drown out sections of the dialogue. At the present stage of technical proficiency, it would be impossible to record a scene and, afterwards, eliminate the unwanted noises. So, the director places two

microphones scientifically ; one round which the actors cluster and the other about ten yards away. Now both microphones will have an equal share of traffic signals from one hundred yards, yet one will record the actors with far greater definition. The signals of the two microphones can, finally, be electrically superimposed in contrary directions ; similar electric impulses, of opposite signs, mutually cancelling one another.

It may happen that microphones will be invented for the special elimination of each likely kind of noise interference. Already, there is a wind-proof mike on the market, the mike being protected by a light wire frame covered with airplane cloth. Or, dubbing, that is the addition of sound at a later stage, might be far more widely resorted to since it has been found practical to splice extra frames into the sound track in order to achieve exact synchronisation.

Next ; the mechanized lens of the eye has not escaped the attention paid to the lens-ear.

Specialists have written that any further refinements with glass might be beyond the physical possibilities of the material, and the problem of the secondary spectrum has only been solved in microscopic objectives of fluorite. However, the ordinary film stock of yesterday was insensitive to red ; the optician, therefore, was able to ignore the red focus, chromatically correcting for the blues and greens. Trouble came with PAN. The remedy was to send the minimum focus up to green, bringing red and violet to the same focal length. Colour photography (to pursue the history) reintroduced the question of higher apertures : an aperture which permits of sufficient exposure for colour photography does not give the requisite depth of field. . . Lenses, too, are dragged

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into the sound-business-scuffle. The omission of one degree of electrical amplification, afforded by increase of light transmitted through the optical system of the sound-on-film reproduction, would considerably reduce present distortions.

Studio workers, contending with alarums of modern lenses (stereoscopy is going to complicate the cameraman's job to such a degree that he will be compelled to learn some optics) and microphones, are faced, also, with a revolution of film stock.

The International Safety Films Company declare that their safety film of transparent paper is "in no way related to the cellulose acetate family, and has greater physical toughness and durability." A manifesto promises that it will not generate explosive gasses on rise of temperature, nor, in combustion, will it liberate poisonous fumes. ("Combustion, which is only very slow!") The industry, indeed, calls for some assurance, for ancient varieties of non-flam deteriorated rapidly and, occasionally, exhibited inflammable tendencies during storage, besides suffering permanently from grain, shrinkage and buckling. The new company, though, state that their stock will sweep away insurance premiums, and the day is hopefully awaited when a daily journal, in the shape of a small role of paper, will be taken in at every house.

Also on the market, at the moment, are one or two processes for lengthening the life of current brands of film stock. One idea is to coat the surface of the film with hard gelatine. This not only saves the moisture of the emulsion but imparts a relief to the photography.

Wide film was used by Dr. Marey in 1886; the present size being a mere convention. Of the new wide stock there

are three standards, 56, 65 and 70 mm. Exhibitors, understandably, are anxious to press for wide film only in the negative, which could be optically printed on 35 mm. stock. Thus, grain disfigurements might become neglectible; meanwhile, the theatre might temporise with a revolving turret on the projector.

With a turret on the projector it is possible to adjust the large picture to suit the size of the stage. Should the bottom of the screen be close to the stage the large picture can be set out of centre of the small picture. Ross has a variable focus projector lens; the optical principle being that of the telescope. "The operation of a simple racking lever on the lens mount causes the component lenses of the Ross unit to move from the gate aperture and closer to each other." An increase in the picture size up to thirty per cent. is obtainable. But, the centre of the small picture is the centre of the larger. Again, there is said to be no limit (the difficulty of supplying a porous screen of large dimension having been overcome by the Savelite Screen Company) to the size to which Pilgrim can enlarge the picture by his device of gradually withdrawing masking curtains.

Developing (don't you dare! . . .) has not developed in comparison with other cinematic matters. The air, sometimes, is baffled a few more times before it comes into the drying room, or the air is directed by fans to fixed spots; nevertheless, machines abound with a hideous capacity of 7,000 feet per hour!

The exhibitor is the spoilt darling of the inventor. The absorption values of chairs in his theatre have been tested. (Mohair chairs have sound absorption value of 2.6 to 3.6

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units, etc.) It has been proved that unholstered chairs have a balancing effect, rendering the size of the audience less accoustically important. . . Deaf patrons have been given satisfaction with "a vibrating element surrounded by a sheet of rubber and attached to a wire, which can be plugged into the sound reproducers in any wired cinema." Vibrations are received *via* the bones of the jaw, the listener sipping sounds through a straw. . . It is beyond the control of a single person to give a check-up on all the inventions that have pampered the exhibitor. The most far-reaching are :

1. The production of the two shilling photo-electric cell.

Selenium cells were, for some time, considered the most sensitive. Alas, the sensitivity slowly vanishes. Alkali cells have taken their place; these need a polarisation of 200 volts. The two shilling cell is of certain galena crystals which, when touched by silver wire, show, at the point of contact, light-electric sensitivity. No additional polarisation phenomenon is necessary. It has ever been the aim of cells to stabilise the decrement in current with the decrement in light; the new cell allows the transformation of light energy into electric energy to take place without inertia.

2. The Cue-Meter, a new American appliance revealing the number of feet left in the top spool box of the projection machine, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's Automatic Fader Control.

Both ideas are intended to supersede the cue sheet. M-G-M do not ask the exhibitor to buy fresh apparatus; it is a printing operation carried out by a squeeze mat control. Surface noises are reduced as the black mat narrows the sound track.

Other ingenious new inventions appear to have little rela-

tion to the demands of public, renter, exhibitor, or studio executive. For example, the many astonishing continuous-motion projectors would, at cursory glance, hardly justify their substitution of rocking mirrors for the Maltese Cross by sparing sprocket holes.

Then, who dare predict the demands of the cinematic tomorrow?

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE

A Tear for Lycidas.

During last year's London season we saw and heard one Talkie, *Hearts in Dixie* and wrote thereof in *Close Up* and foreswore our sex by asserting, in bold, masculine, side-taking, either-or fashion, that no matter what degree of perfection might presently be attained by the recording apparatus we were certain that the talkie, as distinct from the sound-film, will never be able to hold a candle to the silent film.

This year, therefore, though we knew there must be small local halls still carrying on, and hoped that our own little Bethel, which we had left last autumn ominously "closed for repairs," might have taken courage to re-open, we felt that we were returning to a filmless London. Resignedly.

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There was, there always is, one grand compensation : we came fully into our heritage of silent films. " The Film," all the films we had seen, massed together in the manner of a single experience—a mode of experience standing alone and distinct amongst the manifolds we assemble under this term—and with some few of them standing out as minutely remembered units, became for us treasure laid up. Done with in its character of current actuality, inevitably alloyed, and beginning its rich, cumulative life as memory. Again and again, in this strange " memory " (which, however we may choose to define it, is, at the least, past, present and future powerfully combined) we should go to the pictures ; we should revisit, each time with a difference, and, since we should bring to it increasing wealth of experience, each time more fully, certain films stored up within. But to the cinema we should go no more.

Arriving, we found our little local hall still wearing its mournful white lie. All over London we met—there is no need to describe what we met, what raucously hailed us from the façade of every sort of cinema. Our eyes learned avoidance, of façade, newspaper column, hoarding and all the rest.

But ears escape less readily and we heard, as indeed, bearing in mind the evolution of pianola and gramophone, we had expected to hear, of the miracles of realism achieved by certain speech-films. Of certain beautiful voices whose every subtle inflection, every sigh, came across with a clarity impossible in the voice speaking from the stage. People who last year had wept with us had now gone over to the enemy and begged us to see at least this and that : *too* marvellous.

Others declared that each and every kind of speech film they had seen had been *too* dire.

We accepted the miracle so swiftly accomplished, the perfected talkie, but without desire, gladly making a present of it. Wishing it well in its world that is so far removed from that of the silent film. Saw it going ahead to meet, and compete with, the sound-film. Heard both rampant all over the world.

Driven thus to the wall, we improvised a theorem that may or may not be sound: that it is impossible both to hear and to see, to the limit of our power of using these faculties, at one and the same moment. We firmly believe that it is sound.

The two eloquences, the appeal to the eye and the appeal to the ear, however well fused, however completely they seem to attain their objective—the spectator-auditor—with the effect of a single aesthetic whole, must, in reality, remain distinct. And one or the other will always take precedence in our awareness. And though it is true that their approximate blending can work miracles the miracle thus worked is incomparably different from that worked by either alone.

Think, for example, of the difference between music heard coming, as it were, out of space and music attacking from a visible orchestra. Recall that an intense concentration on listening will automatically close the eyes. That for perfect seeing of a landscape, work of art, beloved person, or effectively beautiful person, we instinctively desire silence. And agree, therefore, that there neither is, nor ever can be, any substitute for the silent film. Agree that the secret of its power lies in its undiluted appeal to a single faculty.

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It may be urged that to the blind the world is a sound-film whose images must be constructed by the extra intelligent use of the remaining senses helped out by memory, while to the deaf it is a silent film whose meaning cannot be reached without some contrived substitute for speech. That deaf people are more helpless and are usually more resentful of, less resigned to, their affliction than are the happier blind. And that therefore the faculty of hearing is more important than that of sight : the inference being that the soundless spectacle is a relatively lifeless spectacle.

Those who reason thus have either never seen a deaf spectator of a silent film or, having seen him, have failed to reflect upon the nature of his happiness. For the time being he is raised to the level of the happy, skilful blind exactly because his missing faculty is perfectly compensated. Because what he sees is complete without sound, he is as one who hears. But take a blind man to a never so perfect sound-film and he will see but little of the whole.

In daily life, it is true, the faculty of hearing takes precedence of the faculty of sight and is in no way to be compensated. But on the screen the conditions are exactly reversed. For here, sight *alone* is able to summon its companion faculties : given a sufficient degree of concentration on the part of the spectator, a sufficient rousing of his collaborating creative consciousness. And we believe that the silent film secures this collaboration to a higher degree than the speech-film just because it enhances the one faculty that is best able to summon all the others : the faculty of vision.

Yet we have admitted, we remember admitting, that without musical accompaniment films have neither colour nor

sound ! That any kind of musical accompaniment is better than none. The film can use almost any kind of musical accompaniment. But it is the film that uses the music, not the music the film. And the music, invisible, "coming out of space," enhances the faculty of vision. To admit this is not to admit the sound-film as an improvement on the silent film though it may well be an admission of certain possible sound-films as lively rivals thereof.

Life's "great moments" are silent. Related to them, the soundful moments may be compared to the falling of the crest of a wave that has stood poised in light, translucent, for its great moment before the crash and dispersal. To this peculiar intensity of being, to each man's individual intensity of being, the silent film, with musical accompaniment, can translate him. All other forms of presentation are, relatively, diversions. Diversions in excelsis, it may be. But diversions. Essential, doubtless, to those who desire above all things to be "taken out of themselves," as is their definition of the "self."

Perhaps the silent film is solitude and the others association.

* * *

Wandering at large, we found ourselves unawares, not by chance, we refuse to say by chance, in a dim and dusty by-street : one of those elderly dignified streets that now await, a little wistfully, the inevitable re-building. Giving shelter meanwhile to the dismal eddyings and scuttlings of wind-blown refuse : grey dust, golden straw, scraps of trodden paper. Almost no traffic. Survival, in a neglected central backwater, of something of London's former quietude.

Having, a moment before, shot breathlessly across the

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rapids of a main thoroughfare, we paused, took breath, looked about us and saw the incredible. A legend, not upon one of those small, dubious façades still holding their own against the fashion, but upon that of the converted Scala theatre : Silent Films. Continuous Performance. *Two Days. The Gold Rush.*

Why, we asked, stupefied, had we not been told? Why, in the daily lists, which still, hopelessly hopeful, we scanned each day, was there no mention of this brave Scala?

A good orchestra. Behind it the heart of Chaplain's big wandering film : the dream wherein the sleeping host entertains his tragically absent guests with the *Oceana Roll*, showing itself to an empty house.

To the joy of re-discovering a lost enchantment was added strange new experience. Within us was all we had read and heard and imaginatively experienced of the new conventions. All that at moments had made us sound-fans. Enhancing critical detachment. We were seeing these films with new eyes. They stood the test. These new films, we said, may be the companions, they can never be the rivals of the silent film. The essential potency of any kind of silent film, "work of art" or other, remains untouched.

Later we saw *The Three Musketeers* and agreed, perhaps with Fairbanks, we trust with Fairbanks, that if melodrama be faithfully sought all other things are added unto it. And we were looking forward to *Metropolis* and *The Circus*, when suddenly the theatre closed.

The experiment, we gathered, had not been a success.

But what, we would respectfully enquire of the Scala management, what is the use of winking in the dark? What

is the use of having a silent season, in an unfrequented by-street, and leaving London's hundreds of thousands of silent-film lovers to become aware of it by a process of intuition? Advertisement is surely less costly than an empty house. And we are prepared to wager that any house bold enough to embark on a silent season and to advertise it at least to the extent of listing it in the dailies will gather its hundreds for each showing.

[Humble apologies to *The Boltons* cinema in Kensington and the Palais de Luxe in Piccadilly; of whose current loyalty to the silent film the writer is informed too late for tribute in this article.]

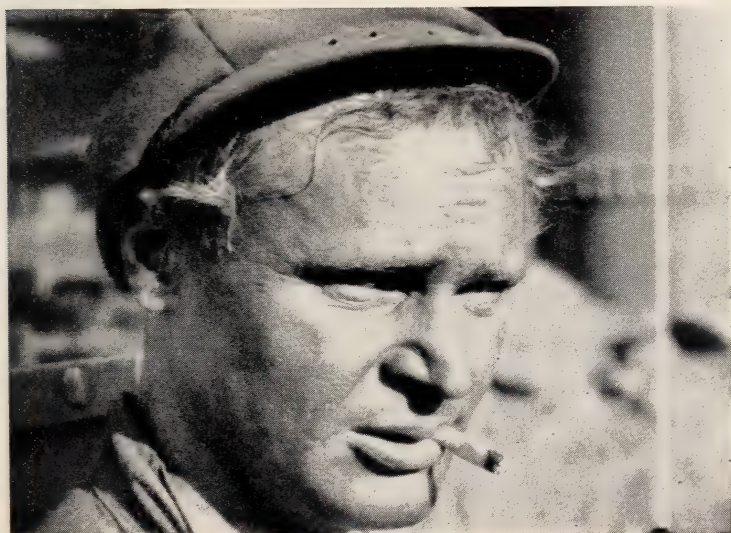
DOROTHY RICHARDSON.

DOCUMENTATION: THE BASIS OF CINEMATOGRAPHY

For me, the soul of the cinema obstinately persists in abiding in Documentation. And it is in this domain, too long left fallow, that he who without profanation may be called an artist will find at once his richest source of inspiration and the fullest liberty to realise his conceptions. Mature talents, moreover, disgusted by the discouragements of the cinema, languishing in its cage that is lit only by the simulacrum of



From *To-Day*, a new film by Esther Schub, well known as a composer of news-reel material. A Sovkino film.





From *First Girl*, directed by Golub and Sadkovitch, young graduates from the State School of Cinematography.



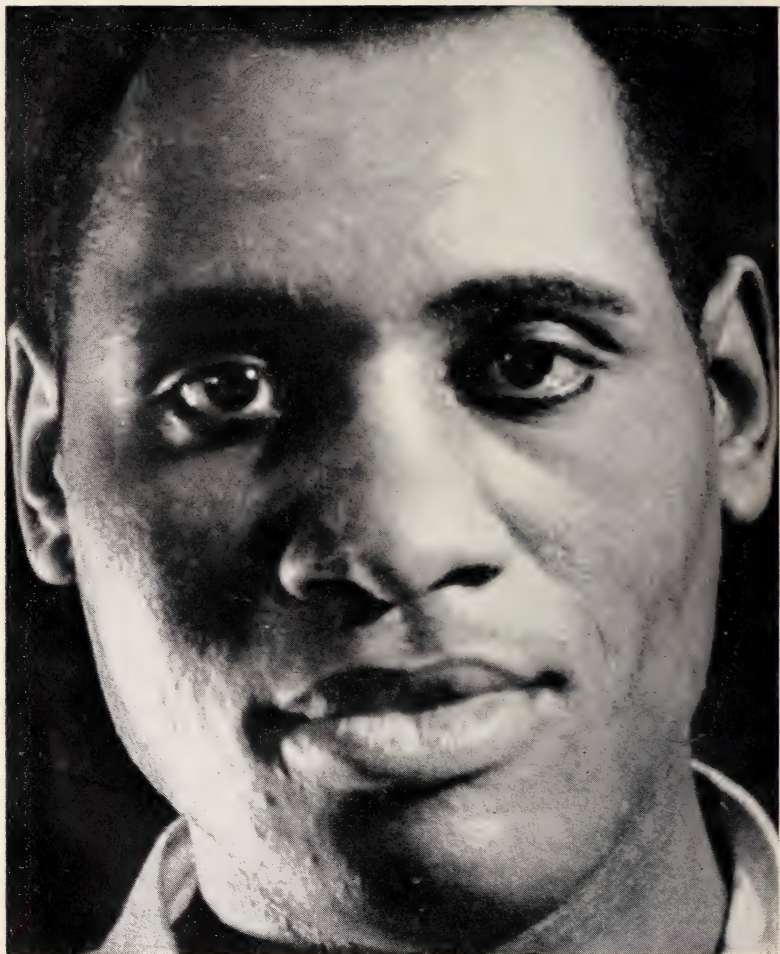
From *The Silent Don*, from the novel by Sholokhov, the filming of which has just been finished by O. Preobrashenskaya, director of *The Women of Ryazan* (*The Village of Sin*).



From *The Earth*, Dovjenko's new film for Wufku.



Fallen Gods, an educational film depicting the fight of the Soviets against venereal diseases among the buriats and Mongol tribes.
A Vostokino film.



Paul Robeson, the dark hero of *Borderline*, which will be seen in England during the Autumn.



A production still from Leon Poirier's *Caïn*. Thomy Bourdelle and Rama Tahe, the stars, with Poirier.



Thomy Bourdelle as Caïn in Leon Poirier's film, which is to be released in November.

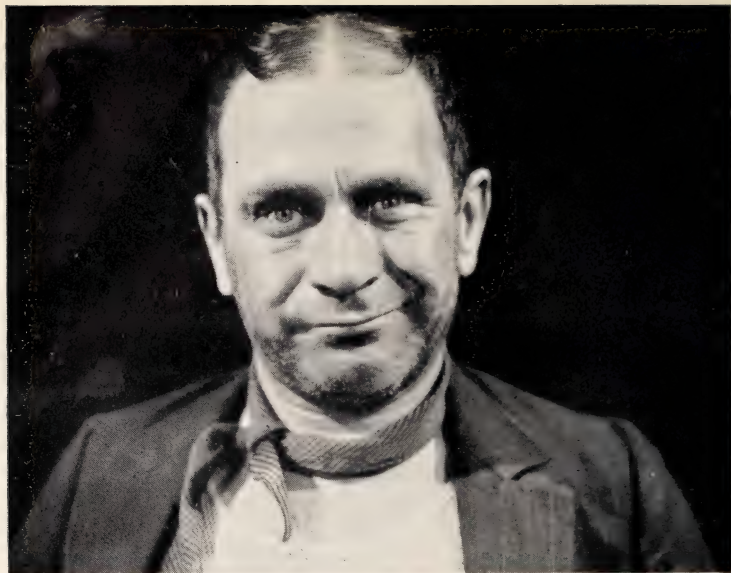


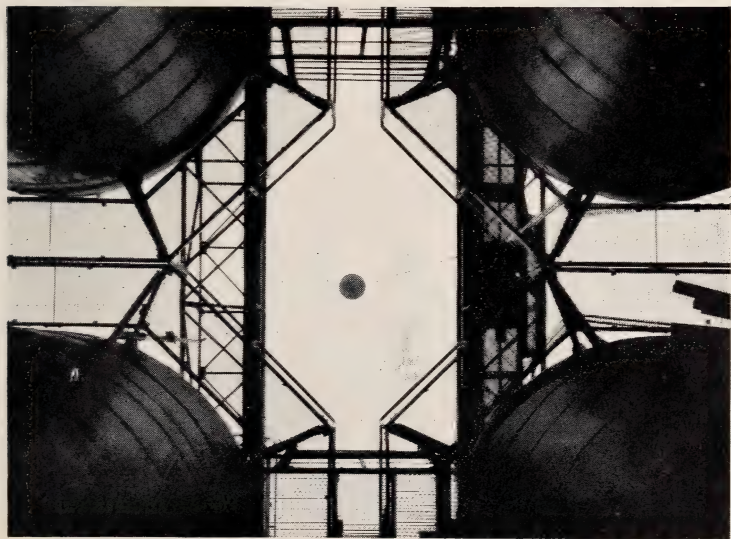
Photo: Ufa

Kurt Lilien as Zeuge Kulicke in the Ufa-Tonfilm *Hokuspokus* (*Murder for Sale*), directed by Gustav Ucicky, photographed by Carl Hoffman.

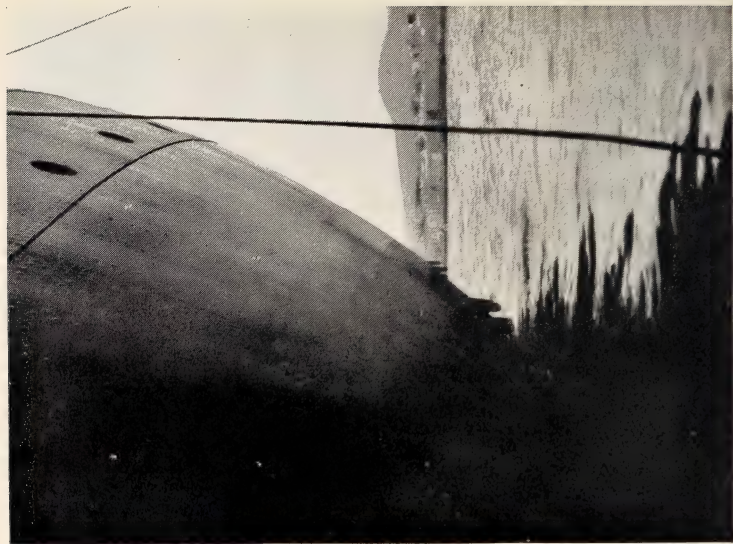
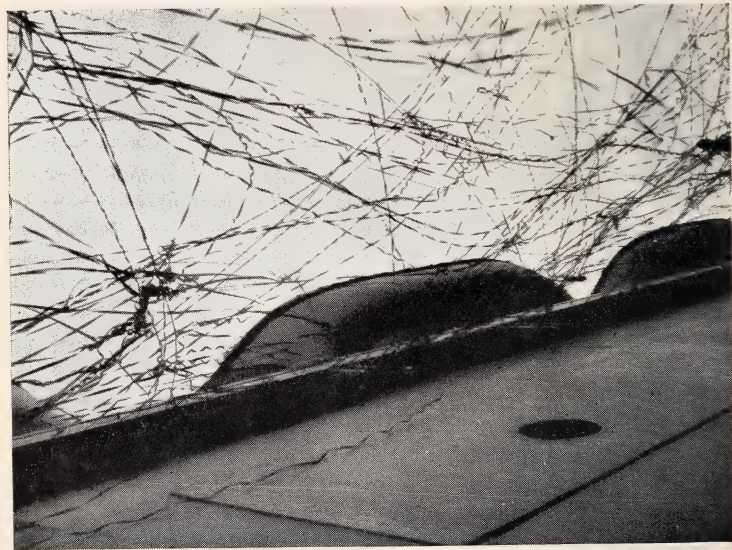


Photo: Ufa

From *Hokuspokus* (*Murder for Sale*). Well-chosen types for the jury.



Photos by Hans Casparius, taken during his sea travels round Africa.



Impressive views of the ship prior to departure and at anchor. Mr. Casparius has made a film of the cruise.

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sunlight, dream of revitalising their creative energy at a purer source. Does not Murian make common cause with Flaherty of the exotic islands, apostle of the natural cinema?

* * *

Cutting through life's surrounding atmosphere the documentary cinema has shown us its unsuspected aspects. For example: the rhythms of the life of a great town, the synthesis of the universe attempted by Walter Ruttmann in *La Symphonie d'une Grande Ville* and *La Mélodie du Monde*, and René Clair's *La Tour* and Joris Ivens' *Le Pont d'Acier*, poetic frescoes of metallurgy. And the curious picturesqueness — not in the Michelin sense — of Lacombe's *La Zone*. Poirier's reels, *La Croisière blanche*, *La Croisière noire*, evocations of journeys one may never make, the grandeurs of natural décor felt by Epstein (*L'Affiche*, *La Belle Nivernaise*), nostalgia of Norwegian fiords and the distant horizons of the Far-West, the strange personality of an object or a machine, seeming suddenly to take on life when thrown upon the screen. And the invisible made visible by the miracle of acceleration, (*La Vie des Plantes*) and of slow-motion, (*L'Eclatement d'une bulle de savon*). Films such as *Gardiens de Phare*, *Tour au Large*, *Finis Terrae*, certain efforts of Abel Gance, dominated by the gigantic personality of the sea: that mask with a thousand expressions one might watch, armed with a camera, for a life-time.

* * *

It is especially in the documentary film rather than in the studio-film—where, in the interest of the objective exigencies, everything must, or at any rate should, be re-created—that we may distinguish what is photogenic from what is not.

Why is it that reels taken from life are so often dull and lifeless? Why are we so often taken aback by the flat reproduction of a landscape our eyes have found infinitely charming, by its reduction to the semblance of a picture-postcard saddened by the screen's dark frame? And why, on the other hand, will an insignificant little roadway suddenly take on majesty?

It is because our own eye and that of our camera neither see nor reason in the same way. *We must understand with the one and see with the other*: apothegm our producers seem still to ignore.

Yesterday, to-day- at this instant, we have had unawares before our eyes a marvellous film whose moving aspects will reveal their integral significance only in passing through the camera's mechanical eye: this drop of dew rolls along this leaf as despairingly as does the tear down the face of that child: carried along by the Niagara of a streamlet, this ant is drowned before our powerless eyes, and we tremble for the fate of the fly that a spider, monstrous, almost filling the screen, is about to pounce upon.

These are film-dramas that no producer plus blond ingénues can rival. But if, on the other hand, we try never so cunningly to reproduce the glories of a rose-garden, or the atmosphere of a spring-scented landscape, the miracle stops dead: we have been decoyed by elements foreign to the cinema. Some years ago Jean Epstein stated this phenomenon with mathematical precision: "*every aspect of objects, persons and souls,*" he said "*is photogenic whose moral quality is increased by cinematic reproduction. No aspect*

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is photogenic or relevant to cinematography that is not intensified by cinematic reproduction."

* * *

It is useless to shoot a burning house with the idea of expressing the grandeur and horror of fire. A short time ago René Moreau brought back from New York a small film, some of whose photography was quite charming but which failed entirely to express the deep poetry of a modern city. Why? Probably because the author had photographed a city that calls to be cinematised. Since then he has given us *Venice*, a subject more docile to his painter's temperament. Personally I have attempted in *Autour de l'Argent* to render, by strictly cinematic devices, the febrility of a ciné-studio in full work. In this subject there is incomparable photogenic material for anyone possessing the cinematic eye. And if I had not been held up by innumerable material obstacles I would claim no credit for having accomplished my "cinematic indiscretions." With *Quand les Epis se courbent* Van Canstein and I have aimed at evoking the entire photogenic material of the peaceful life of the fields.

* * *

Irony apart, it is already long ago that the boxing of sardines and the tanning of rabbit-skins served as stop-gaps in cinema programmes. Documentation has claimed its rights. It even provokes discussion. There are "romantic" documentationists and "pure" documentationists. Outcries. Struggles. No solution is reached for the very good reason that there is nothing to solve. Between pure documentation, representing more or less succinctly experiences taken from

life (the first Arctic films, *The Smile of Lloyd-George* and romantic documentation, *Nanook, Moana*) wherein similar experiences in the interest of improved cinematic rendering, are interpreted and idealised by the artist composing the strip, we may not, I think, establish a preference. It would be a mistake to embellish *La Croisière de l'U-35*, but we lack the courage to regret that *White Shadows in the South Seas* was an entirely fictitious work.

Let us rather beware of certain films presented as authentic and actually a gross abuse of the confidence of the public. They are the result of a more or less adroit mingling of scenes taken from life with constructed scenes, the whole captioned in a manner at once arbitrary and childish. Unforgettable is a scene (was it not in *Milak, Chasseur de Groenland?*) where the camera-man complacently films the expedition's dog occupied in devouring the expedition's last provisions—according to caption—to the great consternation—again according to caption—of its last member.

These tasteless farces will disappear when their trickeries become unacceptable to a public that is daily growing more discriminating.

* * *

All that has been said tends to elucidate the necessity for enlarging the meaning we have been in the habit of reading into the term "documentary."

White Shadows is documentary. But so also is the exploration of the human face that is called *The Passion of Jeanne d'Arc*.

JEAN DREVILLE.

ACTION

In the general fluster and excitement attending the advent of the talkies, an important element of cinema patronage was quite overlooked. Producers and exhibitors alike forgot the children. Only recently have they become conscious of the fact that juvenile attendance showed a marked falling off coincidentally with the introduction of phonofilms. In their eagerness to sophisticate the screen with speech, their psychological machinery slipped a cog. The child's need and valuation of pictures was left out of the reckoning.

By every reason of their inherent muteness the movies were obliged to tell their stories more or less clearly in pictorial presentment. Comedies and "Westerns" in particular lent themselves ideally to this elementary method of story telling. Action spoke more loudly than words, and much more vividly withal. Charlie Chaplin and Tom Mix were veritable heroes to millions of youngsters, because of what they did. What they said was of no moment or was supplied in imagination by each child according to his own simple notion of fitness. Their films, together with those of others of like character, needed no vocal interpretation.

But these child-enticing features of cinema programmes vanished with the coming of the speakies. Oral wisecracking

was in large measure substituted for action. The comic gave way to "refined comedy." The rip-roaring "Western" was replaced by the out-of-door spoken drama. To the child the movies ceased to exist. He had been robbed of his birthright, and in token of his rebellion against this injustice he forsook the cinema.

Only Chaplin, at the time, appears to have sensed the situation. He obstinately refused to become vocal. But at the same time, held by the laziness and indifference which have lately characterized his attitude toward picture production, he made no effort to supply the suddenly developed void. His *City Lights*, already under way at the outbreak of the talkies, is still dragging along with nonchalant unconcern. Had he the energy and interest of his younger days he might have returned to the activity of those days and turned out, as he did then, a picture a month. However, he now agrees with many of his admirers, that he is more artist than clown and must therefore not demean himself by too frequent contact with the circus-loving bourgeoisie.

In the meantime, with its accustomed canniness, Hollywood has awakened to the situation presented by the falling off of juvenile patronage. Not that it will return to the silent movies. It will never do that. But it has realized that speech and sound are not incompatible with self-interpretative action. It has learned, on the contrary, that these adjuncts if properly employed can be made to accentuate childish interest and pleasure.

The first attempt in this direction has been the animated cartoon with synchronized sound. And no cinema produc-

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tion has ever met with like popular approval. A child today will uncomplainingly sit through an incomprehensible full-length talking picture for the sake of a single reel of *Mickey Mouse*. Taking their cue from this, every one of the larger studios is now putting out a series of these vocalized cartoons.

Also, Mack Sennett, the greatest of all comedy producers, but whose genius had gone to seed in the overworked field of silent films, has again entered the lists in response to the need of the child and the child-minded. Speech and sound have given him new elements with which to play and with which to amplify his ingenuities. And judged by what he has already done in this enlarged field, a Mack Sennett audible comedy is destined to insure a full house anywhere, at any time, and to revive the popularity he enjoyed in the pristine days of custard-pie mummery.

The two-reel "Western" and the hair-raising serial, which were abruptly discarded two years ago, are likewise making their reappearance in recognition of the necessity of catering to the child element of the public. But they, too, like the comedy, are heightened in effectiveness and appeal by the discriminating use of voice and noise.

Unless we are upon the eve of a distinctly new era in picture making, in which two broad classes of patrons are to be served with separate cinema fare according to their respective levels of mentality, the vocalized modifying of these restored types of film marks the beginning of a general modification all along the line, whereby action will again be chiefly depended upon for the telling of a story, with speech relegated to the office of mere accompaniment or emphasis.

At all events, some change is due. Whatever it may be, however, it will not be a retrograde step—a return to silence. On the contrary, it will bring to the screen a new development, and a development which must be credited primarily to the rebellion of the child against the initial over-accentuation of speech and the consequent hurt of specific value and attractiveness of motion pictures.

CLIFFORD HOWARD.

AVENUE PAVILION

(Third Edition.)

So the Avenue Pavilion is to change its policy once more. After a long period of success as the only theatre where intelligent films could be seen regularly, the Gaumont-British Circuit decided that it must go over to talkies. After a few weeks of mediocre talk films, one hears that almost immediately it is to become London's first News Reel Cinema. Fox Movietone in America, who have several successful News Reel Theatres in the States are anxious to establish a similar venture in London and the Avenue Pavilion has been selected as the centre for the try-out.

Programmes will be of one hour's duration, consisting of

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sound news reels, Mickey Mouse cartoons and short interests, running from noon to 11 p.m.

Fox Movietone, known in Britain as British Movietone News, contemplate organising a daily edition and their American chief is here for that purpose.

It is difficult to prophesy success or otherwise. Similar ventures, on a half-hearted scale have been attempted in London before, and they have all failed. That, of course, was before the news reels added sound and dialogue. It is difficult to imagine the new policy smashing the Box office unless the quality of the news reels shows a radical and sustained improvement. Most of them nowadays are just too terrible for words. Their choice of subjects is invariably limited to about three—the inspection of troops by Royalty, sporting events and speeches by gentlemen whose intelligence is in inverse ratio to their lung power. A little less noise and a little more creative imagination in selection and presentation might make all the difference.

R. BOND.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

ACTOR'S VIEWPOINT.

"I have played in nine films," said Ernest Thesiger, "and I am very cross about it."

Should I meet a man who knows all about Eisenstein's theory of relativity I regret to record that I would not be deeply moved, the reason being (so arrogant are men) that I know relatively nothing about Eisenstein; but as we have all tried to act (those *screaming* family charades) I could not resist a feeling of intimidation for one whose work is so assured.

"There is no organization in British films," Mr. Thesiger continued brusquely as though he had just discovered this alarming fact. "Every minute of my life is organized, so I begrudge the idle hours of sitting around the set."

Now, I remembered reading, in his book of memoirs, that Mr. Thesiger has a habit of electrifying his fellow travellers by taking out his crochet work in railway carriages; so, I could not refrain from saying, in a small voice. "Why didn't you take your crochet work with you?"

"But I always worked on the set," he declared without a blush.

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"What did they say?" I demanded excitedly.

"Unprintable," he sighed.

"Please, please tell me," I begged.

"———," he answered.

"Unprintable," I agreed.

Cursing to myself the laws of censorship I let my eyes fall on the bowls of rose leaves and gentle watercolours which E. T. used to exhibit in Bond Street before he became an actor. Soothed by the delightful calm of the room, I began to forget my mission; Mr. Thesiger, however, had organized his day and he went on being interviewed whether I listened or not.

"Always," he declared crisply, "I put the stage first. On the stage I can play the part of a young boy; by sheer personal magnetism I can make the audience accept me in such a role. The cinema, on the other hand, is a *visual-aural* and not a *mental* entertainment. Directors? Of course, they do everything in the films; copying out passages from great authors does not make one a writer, if you see what I mean?"

But my time on the schedule was up and I could not tell him what I saw.

O. B.

A LETTER.

Edmund Meisel has written to us with details of the sound version of *Potemkin*.

"I think that *Potemkin* is much better and more interest-

ing in the sound version. Besides the actors, we have twenty five musicians and a talking and singing chorus. The musicians are very well known artistes; each one is a soloist. The recording is made by *Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft*. The producer, Lippel, who wrote the German words himself, has already successfully made several sound versions of silent pictures. There are not too many talking sequences, the whole sound version being thought as a symphony. As you know *Potemkin* is a good subject for a treatment like that; all the talking is done to explain the plot shortly and *to give an exciting speed*. We intend to make an English version soon."

"I am working on *Stürme über dem Montblanc*, which is the first talking picture of Dr. Franck."

We wish Mr. Meisel all the luck the Fates failed to give him in London.

O. B.

FROM THE EMPIRE.

(A catalogue with a Moral.)

Whenever we see an Indian film we ask ourself whether it is an act of providence or done on purpose.

For the sake of completeness, and as a warning, *Close Up* might list some of the native pictures shown recently in London.

Krishnakanta's Will (14, 453 feet) with Amrita Lal Bose

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and Seeta Devi : a picture with stilted titles, a triangle plot and no recommendations. *Anarkali* (10, 594 feet) with Sulochana; a tedious patchwork of the usual impossible length. *The Tigress* (9, 651 feet) directed by Chandulah Shah; a "small hall" affair with slightly better photography. Others include: *Durghese Nandini* (12, 372 feet) with Seeta Devi, *Madhuri* (6, 900 feet) directed by Chowdhary, and *Sarala* (10, 650).

What is more, the Quota has also produced for us some Australian films. Even the interest of quoting the length is denied. *Far Paradise* though, was directed by the Sisters McDonagh. Ingenuous Australian flicks like *Jewelled Nights* and *Fettered Love*, two of the last to be trade shown, might add their titles to the list to strengthen somebody's case.

O. B.

BIG BUSINESS.

It is not until the exhibitors start kicking against guarantees and sharing terms and disc charges that we learn that both exhibitors and renters are starving, and that poverty stalks Wardour Street and High Street, Kensington, alike.

Take this from a Press report :

"Paramount Publix Corporation estimates its consolidated net profit for the six months ending June last, after all taxes and charges, at £1,686,000.

Reading further we see that this is a record, and is about

65 per cent. ahead of the profit for the corresponding period last year.

The estimated profit for the three months ending June, 1930, is only \$3,600,000.

We sympathise.

The case of Warner Brothers (whom history will worship as the creators of Rin Tin Tin and Sonny Boy) makes depressing reading.

Their net profits for the year ending August 31, 1929, were three and a half million pounds. This was just a miserable 744.6 per cent. over the previous year.

But now comes the news that owing to " rapid expansion and disappointing summer earnings " they have passed a dividend due on the common stock, although paying the regular quarterly dividend of 55 cents per share on preferred stock.

How very, very sad.

R. BOND.

SACRILEGE.

According to American papers, Universal intend to put out *The White Hell of Pitz Palu* with a running dialogue commentary supplied by Graham McNamee, their star news reel reporter.

" THE VOICE OF THE ONE AND ONLY GRAHAM MCNAMEE " screams a Trade announcement. " A new type of picture . . . astonishing . . . bewildering. . .

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THE ONLY NEW THING IN TALKING PICTURES SINCE TALKING PICTURES BEGAN."

"NEVER ANYTHING LIKE IT," says the *Washington Herald*.

We are astonished, we are bewildered, we are sure that there has never been anything like it before, and, we hope, never again.

Mr. Graham McNamee's wise-cracks, and "Oh Boy, Look at This" stuff are bad enough in the news reels, but when "the best loved voice in the world" starts on this wonderful production of Dr. Fanck and Pabst audiences would be justified in making some sort of protest.

R. BOND.

HOLLYWOOD NOTES.

Despite an obvious element of incongruity, the continued influx of European talent is lending substance to Hollywood's self-rating as a world centre of artistic culture. At all events, it has made an undoubted beginning in the annual symphony concerts held in the Hollywood Bowl during July and August. These "symphonies under the stars," nightly attended by upwards of fifteen thousand music lovers, have become an established institution, sealed by the approval of international music critics. The popular presentation and enjoyment of Bach, Beethoven, Glück, Brahms, Wagner, Tschaiakowsky, Stravinski, Rachmaninoff are no longer an

exotic novelty. The rendering of these masters and their interpretations by foreign conductors and artistes are accepted as part and parcel of Hollywood's cosmopolitan art life, while the audiences, increasingly augmented by European additions to the cinema colony, are yearly becoming more appreciative of the truly high merit of these out-of-door concerts amid the rugged foothills of the Sierra Madre. The conductors this year, representing Germany, Austria, Italy and Spain, were Alfred Hertz, Karl Krueger, Oscar Strauss, Bernardino Molinari, Pietro Cimini and Enrico Arbos.

* * *

The introduction of the talking picture and the substitution of mechanical music for theatre orchestras brought immediate confusion and alarm to the tens of thousands of professional musicians throughout the country. In an effort to win popular sympathy and support in their dilemma, the American Federation of Musicians inaugurated a nation-wide advertising campaign, denouncing "robot music" and pleading for a return of the old order.

The situation was especially acute in Hollywood and Los Angeles, all of whose leading cinemas made a speciality of large orchestras and other musical features and thus gave support to a great majority of the four thousand members of the local musicians' union.

During the first flush of the phonofilm novelty, the musicians' protest and appeal fell upon deaf ears. Now, however, a reaction has set in; and Hollywood with its ever alert responsiveness to the public's whims is restoring its cinema orchestras and musical stage programmes; an example which is destined shortly to be followed by all the rest of the country.

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An epidemic of law suits has been added to Hollywood's perennial worries this summer. Foremost in the amount of damages claimed is that of the independent producer of *Ingagi* against the Will Hays organization et al., demanding \$3,365,000 because of the defendants' public declaration that *Ingagi* is a fake. Purporting to be an actual picturization of wild African life, its exposers contend that it is a mere hodge podge of scraps from travel pictures made several years ago, including South American scenes and ingeniously interwoven with scenes made in Hollywood, to say nothing of a Hollywood human impersonation of the gorilla star of the film.

Harold Lloyd's comedy, *The Freshman*, has assumed a momentarily serious character, in that its goggle-bedecked star has been sued for a million dollars on the ground of plagiarism. Lloyd has contested the charge both vigorously and indignantly. Not that he would miss a million dollars, but it has hurt his sense of humour to be accused of filching.

Marion Davies and her producing company have been made defendants in a suit for damages to the extent of a quarter of a million, on the allegation that her *Floradora Girl* is an infringement of *Floradora*, a musical comedy of the past generation and all rights to which are still claimed by its author.

Beatrice Lillie, convinced that she was not treated squarely by Warner Brothers, has sued those gentlemen for breach of contract. In their *Show of Shows* she appeared on the screen for a total of nine minutes. For this she received \$15,000. However, it is not the amount of wages over which the titled comedienne is aggrieved. Sixteen hundred and sixty-six

dollars a minute appears fair enough. Lady Peele's complaint is, that her professional reputation has been damaged fifty-thousand dollars worth by the type of work to which she was limited, in alleged violation of her contract.

Mae Murray is also demanding reparation for asserted injury to her professional standing. She is not as modest in her estimate as Lady Peele, however. She wants \$1,750,000 from Tiffany Productions, Inc., because, in addition to a contended breach of contract, she declares the Tiffany folks did not do her credit in *Peacock Alley*, in which she was starred and which she claims was an "artistic failure," due to the company's neglect and lack of skill.

* * *

Heedful of the growing protests against the character of cinema advertisements, Hollywood producers have united in formulating a code of morals for such advertisements. This follows closely upon the recent code governing picture production, and, as in that case, is not so much dictated by Hollywood's taste as it is by a well justified fear that public disgust may result in materializing the threatened Federal censorship law. Nudity, salacious postures, drinking, profanity, vulgarity, scenes of crimes, ministerial caricatures are some of the specific prohibitions listed in the newly adopted advertising rules. False or misleading statements regarding films are likewise forbidden. Altogether, and quite significantly, the prescript closely parallels that embodied in the pending act of Congress, a synopsis of whose drastic censorship provisions appeared in *Close Up* for July under the title of *Shadow Over Hollywood*.

* * *

CLOSE UP

The *M-G-M Barkies* are proving so popular a novelty, that the original schedule of four of these canine films has been increased to twenty or more. The characters are a troupe of trained dogs, headed by "Buster," "Oscar," and "Jiggs." They appear in human clothes, and through a clever system of sound synchronization are also given human voices. For the most part their two-reel talking and singing comedies are parodies of current popular films. They are being done in French, German, and Spanish, as well as English.

C. H.

Skandal um Eva. A Porten-Nero film, directed by G. W. Pabst, photography by Wagner.

We are not always victorious; otherwise it would be dull. So in spite of heroic struggles on the part of one of the finest directors in Europe, in spite too of Wagner at the camera, kitsch remains kitsch. Sound has turned savage and because we would explore new lands with it, shows us what is the average conception of sound; the repetition of often heard noises made into a pattern according to the formulas of the musical comedies of 1900.

One moment at the beginning is excellent; classrooms, the elderly schoolmistress controlling a restive but respectful class, the recitation of a poem by Heine by nervous fumbling school children to the inspector. But from then on we are taken on a picnic in order that Henny Porten (a schoolmistress) may sing to her pupils, we are then introduced to

a four year old child, so that we may note first his attempts to sing to a musical box, and then his chase throughout the rest of the film of the schoolmistress to whom he must cry "mama" thereby causing scandal. There are pillow fights and songs, never did any scenario writer seize more ravenously upon singing, community and otherwise, and there is a band in a country park, with one real Pabst photograph of a group of moron schoolboys. Everyone in the film has done their best and more, everything that technique and direction and acting could put into a film has been put into it, but it is a grim and losing battle, for nothing could make credible or amusing this repetition of the prehistoric tale of the man who had a four year old son hidden in the country from his fiancée, of how the fiancée found out this dreadful fact and rescued the child, and of how she was accused of being its mother, until everyone chased each other throughout rooms in the proper style up to the final happy ending!

It is said that the film is a tremendous "box office" success. It is said it will carry the German talkie into countries that refuse or censor *Westfront 1918*. It may be necessary to compromise with the present economic situation of the German studios.

But it is useless going to this film for victory or experiment; this time it is knock out to the dragon.

The film *Wir Bauen*, (We Build) by Joris Ivens has been shown with great success at the International Building Congress at Stockholm. It is a pity that England should remain

CLOSE UP

so unaware of the interesting work being done abroad in architecture and construction. Cinematography could bring to the nearest cinema these films which permit the observer to study details of building far more easily than if he were struggling with an unfamiliar landscape and language, in the actual country. Another reason for united action on the part of all film societies until the present regulations as to customs duty and censorship are modified.

We are requested by the commission for Educational and Cultural films to insert the following notice which will be of interest to all students of cinematography and education. In addition five conferences will be held on Film Production and Technique, Foreign Relations and Documentary Films, The Film in Relation to Science, Medicine and Public Health, The Film in the School, and The Film in Adult Education. Particulars of these may be obtained from the Commission at 39, Bedford Square, London.

Novelty and enterprise will be the keynote of the Exhibition of Mechanical Aids to Learning (Through the Eye and the Ear) which the British Institute of Adult Education has arranged to hold from Sept. 4th to 6th at the London School of Economics, Houghton Street, Aldwych, W.C.2.

The Exhibition has been planned to give both the general public and the education authorities, teachers and students an opportunity of viewing and seeing demonstrated the various mechanical devices which have been produced during the last few years to serve as auxiliaries to learning. *Among* the firms and organisations which have arranged to exhibit are the following:—

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General Section.

British Social Hygiene Council	-	Visual Instruction in Social Hygiene.
The Eugenics Society.		

Programmes of educational films, both silent and sound, will be given

CLOSE UP

during the Exhibition. An important feature will be a Model Class demonstrating the use of the Film in teaching children; this Class will be run under the auspices of the Commission on Educational and Cultural Films, and will be conducted for one hour in the morning and afternoon on each day of the Exhibition.

By the kindness of Mr. Will Day, a portion of his well-known Collection illustrating the History and Evolution of the Cinema will be on view at the Exhibition.

The Exhibition will be opened at 3 p.m. on September 4th by Lord Gorell, with Sir Benjamin Gott, Chairman of the Commission on Educational and Cultural Films, in the Chair. Admission on this opening day will be by ticket of invitation only, and limited to representatives of public education authorities, universities, teachers' organisations, and other bodies concerned with education. On Friday, September 5th, and Saturday, September 6th, the Exhibition will be open to the general public between the hours of 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. Admission will be by catalogue, purchaseable at the door (6d.). The catalogue, which will be fully illustrated, will serve both as a guide to the Exhibition and as a permanent descriptive record of the various mechanical devices shown.

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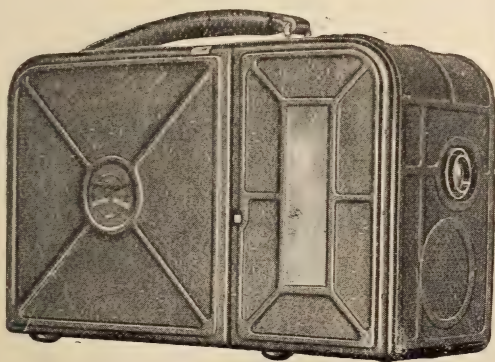
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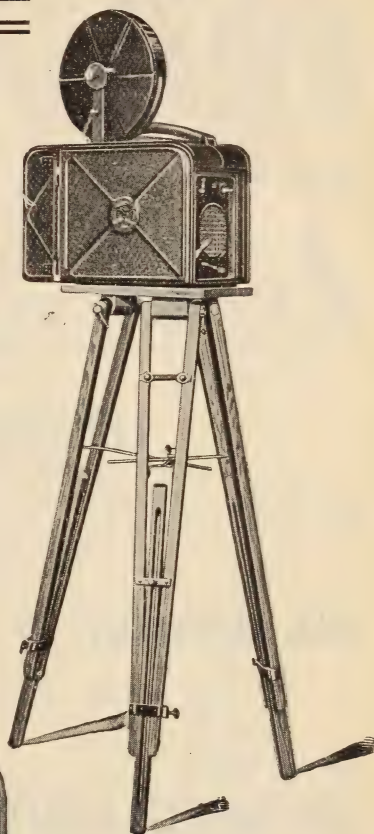
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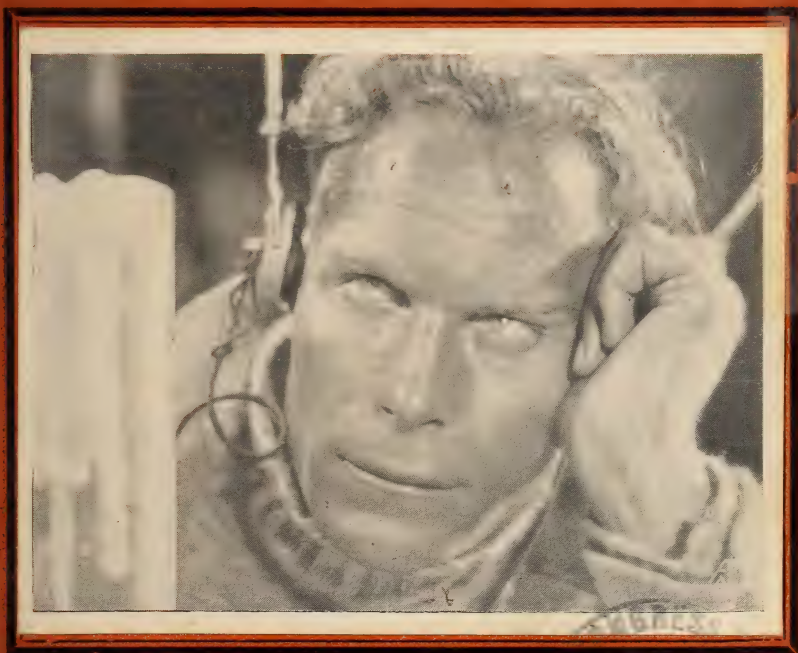
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BY THE EDITOR.

The Film Till Now,* dedicated "to those among cinema audiences who wonder why and think how", is in several ways a significant book, chiefly, perhaps, in that, bearing such a dedication, it could not have achieved its purpose until now, when everyone who wonders why or thinks how knows his *Close Up*, and has become familiar with the kino jargon of those who are trying to make words fit the expression of so different a medium. A medium far beyond words—and that is why any book, any writing on cinema craft, technique or art, must leave restlessness and a sense of incompleteness at the last. *The Film Till Now* is essentially a modern book, a book of "right now", though—as must almost inevitably happen in the business of going to press, proof reading and final organisations, time elapses, and to-day's last development is left behind. We must realise, therefore, that although most of the films mentioned as the

* By Paul Rotha. Jonathan Cape. 10s. 6d. net.

latest works of various directors are of recent date, many of their makers have had time since the book was written to finish one or two more—a bewildering state of affairs, since, as we all know, a director's most recent film has an odd way of cancelling his former efforts. It is bound to remain his one really essential expression—until his next!

Mr. Rotha has made an impressive show and a gallant one. There are books, and they may be good, but the publishers' craft is to make them *inviting*. As with houses, the test of their quality will finally remain simply this: either you are tempted to go in and explore, or repelled by what you think the inside will be like. So also with books. There are ways of binding that could poison the best book in the world. *The Film Till Now*, thank goodness, is a pleasant book to handle, and that is a more important thing than is fully realised.

It is divided into two parts with appendices. The first part is concerned with the Actual, the second with the Theoretical. Opening with a general history of the film and the forms of cinema, we come to a consideration of the films of several countries. Three chapters on the American film. One each on the Soviet, the German, the French and the British film, and one chapter on films from other countries, including Sweden (about which too little is said, for its history has been one of the determining factors of the cinema, not of to-day perhaps, the more assuredly then of to-morrow,) and Japan, which has three paragraphs, indicating that the author is less concerned with it than Eisenstein. Italy, Spain and India are mentioned.

In this first part of the book lies some admirable material.

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Undoubtedly this section is going to be the more popular of the two. Mr. Rotha's investigation of the American cinema is thorough and astute. There is an excellent summary of von Stroheim and his work. The concluding words are: "Stroheim, as a director, has given much to the cinema in an indirect and obscure manner. Stroheim as an actor is always a source of interest. Stroheim as a cinematic genius is not to be countenanced."

The more surprising, therefore, is the author's acclamation of Chaplin as the supreme artist, enduring "the aching pain of loveliness", "an unhappy, disconsolate and lonely man". What is this ability to believe without one single, even momentary uncertainty? Can Chaplin do no wrong? And why has the author acclaimed *The Circus*, a trite and shoddy film, without construction and factory-made in its every emotion, as "one of the greatest tragedies in the history of the film, and yet . . . magnificently funny."? When shall we have the investigation of this clever man and his cult?

In all that will to pathos is only a form of psychic cheating. For pathos, a lechery of the inert, the willingness to pity, so often the betrayal of inner softness, is nearly always a washer-woman's joy, a pub-crawl state of moral wiseacre-ing. Do we have to admire this, or is it not a form of solitary vice?

Chaplin has been more perfect when he has not been seeking these "greatest tragedies." Then strip him of pathos and there's something elfin. Something of Ariel, a wisp of a fellow . . . something, alas, of a proletarian Peter Pan.

Chaplin as the director of *A Woman of Paris* is a different consideration. Much more consolidated, and much less coy.

However, perhaps it is not his appreciation of Chaplin

that will cost Mr. Rotha's readers pangs of disagreement, but the chapter on Soviet films. This chapter begins with a contention that the Soviet film has been largely over-rated . . . the reason being that " content (social and political) may be swallowed in the temporary admiration of the method " . . . " in hasty admiration of perfect technique, it is easy to accept content, theme and meaning without thought as to their full intention ". . . . Is it possible that Mr. Rotha assumes that a " perfect technique " could move anybody to accept anything unless it were a technique flowing toward and enclosing as well as enclosed by its thematic content ?

The vigorous technique of the best Soviet directors would be banal and idiotic in any but an intensely social, intensely controversial theme. Why be afraid of controversy ? Why be afraid of the content ? A well-filmed murder would be more or less unlikely to drive its audience into the streets, a mob of cut-throat desperados, no matter how inviting the murder or auspicious its results. The films that make ladies weep are forgotten in a wreath of smiles. The Soviet films are, in a sense, thundering and radiant proclamations, and the accused " young *cinéastes* " cannot be blamed for accepting content, if that content is the vigorous clap of reality, a slapping of pungent red blood into the anæmic veins of mild erotic matter they have lived on. Social consequences have little place in æsthetic experience, at least the author would have us believe so when he states that " even the iron rule of a Soviet *régime* cannot suppress the birth and development of an instinctively creative mind," which indicates an attitude in favour of art for art's sake, which is what old people used to say was *fin de siècle*.

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However this may be, there is something akin to a sh'iy in Mr. Rotha's approach to the Soviet film. It would be hard to discover what it is that worries him. Distortion? But we have enough of that in our eternal nagging round the throne of Sex Appeal. Licence? Fumbling?

"The exclusion of Trotsky in Eisenstein's *October (Ten Days)*, renders it valueless as an historical document." Surely it was the author's function, unless he was in ignorance of the fact, to point out that originally the film contained sequences to the length of a reel or more, in which Trotsky was featured, and of which the trembling crystal chandeliers were part, and that the mutilation took place later and almost wholly in Germany? When Eisenstein was in Berlin last fall he spent an aggrieved ten minutes describing these mutilations, and his non-recognition of "the chaos that was once my film" when he saw it projected there. *Ten Days* as shown in Germany and other countries, including England, was a parody of the original film, as with *Potemkin* in—was it Holland?—where the film ended with the massacre on the steps, thus revealing to a chastened public what would happen to them if they tried any monkey tricks. There you have a glimpse of the "instinctively creative mind" which cannot be suppressed. *Instinctively?* Well, Eisenstein, it was, who said "Down with instinctive creation"!

Mr. Rotha is very good on his summings-up. Albeit a little 'igh' an' mighty. Directors and films are swept into martial array and martial precision, of which the author is a little too patently the commander. There is a touch of the subaltern on parade. In other words, we are made to feel now and then that the material under discussion is not treated

intrinsically but in mass formation. Not in the analyses, however, only in the summaries, so that a little "mass formation" is inevitable, though its militant dismissals are apt to leave too much unsaid.

In his chapter on the German film, Mr. Rotha shows an appreciative understanding. Passing from an historical outline of the development and decline of the great German period, he approaches a survey of the outstanding directors, of whom Pabst heads the list, to be followed by examinations of the work of Fritz Lang, and of Czinner, to whom he has been over-generous, Czinner remaining suspect now and forever because of what he did in Great Britain when he filmed Pola Negri. Murnau, Berger, Robison, Grune, Galeen, Leni, Pick, and Fanck complete the list. It would have been gratifying to have found some little study of the work of Hans Schwarz, considered in Germany as the most important of the popular modern directors, of Ucicky, who also makes films for Erich Pommer, and of Joe May. These men are the privileged, and if their work is often trivial, with them lies the present and some of the future of the *sprechie*.

In the chapter on French films, are kindly words for the *avant garde* experimentalist. A *bon bouche* for which some struggling young men will be glad and perhaps sustained. It is just as well. *Avant garde* has never been just that, has always been belied by its name. Actually *avant garde* is probably only a hint here and there for a few to see in the films of the best among us, not in the tentative "side-shows" of restricted independents. That, no doubt, we all realise, but it is nice to find Mr. Rotha at least not snubbing the young. Not they alone will be appreciative.

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A meaty chapter, this. Think of it. Sorting out the French cinema! Fragments. Tangle. Laurels to the author for his manipulation. And ungracious surely to snap at random " Marcel l'Herbier is *not* the ' supreme technician of the French cinema '!" Think of his gross and awkward bungling of *l'Argent*, that leering and dissolute camera, those sets, that Helm, that inordinate fussiness of assembly of manner and content. No, l'Herbier, certainly not . . . but there you are! There's a quibble on every page if you feel like it. That is perhaps proof of merit? Certainly, however, when you turn the page and read of Gance's drivelling and pompous *Napoleon* that " it was tediously cumbersome and hopelessly overweighted with symbolic reference " you may say " And same to *l'Argent*!" and be done with it.

Finally, England. What there is to say Mr. Rotha says. It is what anybody would have to say. But the sheet anchor, to use the author's own expression, of the British Film Industry is the *Secrets of Nature* series by British Instructional. Mr. Rotha is tolerant but not very hopeful. There are eight pages to the chapter as against thirty-three to the German one. Hitchcock, Asquith and Grierson are the names that emerge.

Turning to the second part of the book, the first chapters on the aim of the film in general, and " the preconception of Dramatic Content " will be instructive and enlightening. Do not forget we are dealing with film Theory now. Instruction will be available specially to those " who wonder why and think how." It is not a too easy task going back to the beginning and educating from there toward advanced comprehension. " When it is grasped that the formation of a

scene or situation in a film is purely a matter of the constructive editing of visual images, then it will be seen that the film director creates his own time, as well as his own space." That is a pretty far step from "all art . . . has at base the same motive, which may be said to be the creation of a work in the presence of which an observer or listener will experience either pleasure or pain as the mood of the work demands." It is possible that these latter chapters will be a little beyond the grasp—or, shall we say the will to grasp—of the average reader. To the initiate they are orderly, level-headed, and, above all, composed simply, and following mainroads without digression into the esoteric and psychic mazes that too concentrated theorizing is apt to lead one into.

However, even the rawest novice will be able to pluck forth enrichment that will help him with his future films. He will start looking for the "indirect suggestion" that creates psychology.

On the whole, in spite of the exceptions we have perhaps too churlishly taken, this is a praiseworthy and conscientious work. There are excellent appendices. And the illustrations are numerous and well reproduced.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

MOVIE : NEW YORK NOTES

I have had a season of American film-seeing-hearing and I can say that the U.S.A. cinema remains where it was. The revue film came in and has gone out. It used some stunts brought in by a lesser foreigner, Marcel Silver, among others, and they have remained and died as stunts, never once entering into the mind of the movie, as that mind expresses itself in its structural interests. Dance combinations showed virtuoso skill, especially those organized by David Bennett.

The good-bad-man of the underworld has been having his vocal period in films awkward and an occasionally smooth one, *Street of Chance*. The Lingle murder in Chicago is anticipated in *Roadhouse Nights*, not a bad job, but a little haphazard. Excellent organization of scenes is evinced by director Henry King in *Hell Harbor* for a pseudo-Conrad picture on the "dangerous paradise" motive—we've had a run of that too.

War films: *The Case of Sergeant Grischa*, *Journey's End*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*. I've spoken about these in the New Masses for June.

Prison films, reflecting the times childishly, now are coming forth. I have seen two: *Shadow of the Law* and

Numbered Men. The former has the usual Paramount competence at the beginning, but fades out before half-way. The latter is wretched in the typical Warner Brothers' (First National) indifference toward dramatic values, characterization, fluency, the elementary job-qualities.

The only American films that are generally sufferable are the light-hearted comedies without high pitch of drama, and never seeking more than the idyllic. *Young Man from Manhattan* becomes, despite an original germ of "human interest", another one of these passing frivolities, and I am thankful to Monta Bell he kept the picture at its level of youthfulness, and did not attempt to make it a "picture of American life", which King Vidor might have tried to do with it. Paramount can get as far as a good job with "passing frivolities", and that is more than can be said for most of the other companies. In the revue-operetta class, Paramount certainly excels. Metro has been, on the whole, very weak in this type of production. I prefer the light tonal quality of a Paramount film to that of, let us say, a Metro, with its penchant for European blacks. Paramount's grays have the matter-of-fact cleanliness suitable to the American film. Sometimes we find a let-down here too. *The Big Pond* was tonally impure, as was also *Innocents of Paris*. They reflect the entire failure of the Chevalier films, a dependence upon a personality that is pleasant, energetic, but not incisive. Chevalier was capable in *The Big Pond*, but the film was kept simperingly gay instead of allowed to become satirical (if not trenchantly so), as the content implied. *Innocents of Paris* is one of the worst films on record, with its crowded scenes and speech, unbalanced, oversentimentalized,

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the usual offensive child-portrayal of the American film. I am not surprised to find that its director, Richard Wallace, is responsible for *Seven Days' Leave*. I suppose the name of Wallace won him the direction of the Barrie story. How any grown person can write such a fable, and how any grown person can enjoy it, would be a mystery if one did not know the horrible sentimentalism that inhabits mature bodies.

* * *

Why was *Seven Days' Leave* praised? It was such a sweet story. Imagine the stomach that can endure sweet stories that sympathize with an idiotic old lady (a scrub-woman, of course—chivalrous kingdom of gentlemen!) who would have a lad killed for her own pride. The fact that there was no girl-and-boy romance, that old ladies made up the story, affected the critical faculties of the commentators to panegyric. Horrible cute old Beryl Mercer! She was just as simperingly Scotch (if her portrayal is not only Scotch out of Barrie and Hollywood) in *All Quiet*. A static film with as little mobility as *Journey's End*, to which it is not unrelated in its Britishers' attitude toward the "lower classes."

How can anyone believe in the sentiments of those who accept the pacifism of the war-films mentioned and the romanticism of *Seven Days' Leave*? The answer is plain: pacifism is itself uncritical romanticism, sentimentalism, and it has nothing to do with the actual condemnation of war for its real character. This would imply a criticism, even a negation, of present economic society, and the romanticists would not yield to that.

And Welford Beaton recommends Carl Laemmle for the Nobel Peace Prize on the strength of *All Quiet*? Why not?

Was it not bestowed upon Theodore Roosevelt, the biggest peace-bluff of all? It doesn't contradict the spirit of peace prizes that Laemmle is president of the company that made some years ago a film called *The Kaiser, the Beast of Berlin*. And that jingoist fragments are conspicuous in Universal newsreels as in all other "actualities."

* * *

The most interesting of American films that I have seen of late is an industrial, publicity picture, *Business in Great Waters*, of the laying of the Western Electric high-speed cable between Newfoundland and the Azores. The director, Charles Darrell, and photographer, Walter Pritchard, executed no ultra-brilliant conversion of an engrossing, if didactic, narrative—but held to a diligent straightforward record of the enterprise. A very good workman directed, and a photographer who could "shoot" the thing before him, above him and beneath him, sustained an exciting picture in the sequence and light-tonality. Animated drawings added to the tension and interest of the picture, as did the map in *Turksib*. The synchronization disturbed the film. The vocal description of the work maintained an even, moderately inflected tone, but the language and verbal "stretching" rose above the temper of the visual movie, which told the tale unaided. The major offense of the synchronization was the insertion of sea-chanteys into a straightforward, unfabricated account.

* * *

Where is the amateur film during these accumulations? The amateur in America, like the amateur in England, has generally an exaggerated interest in the film. By exagger-



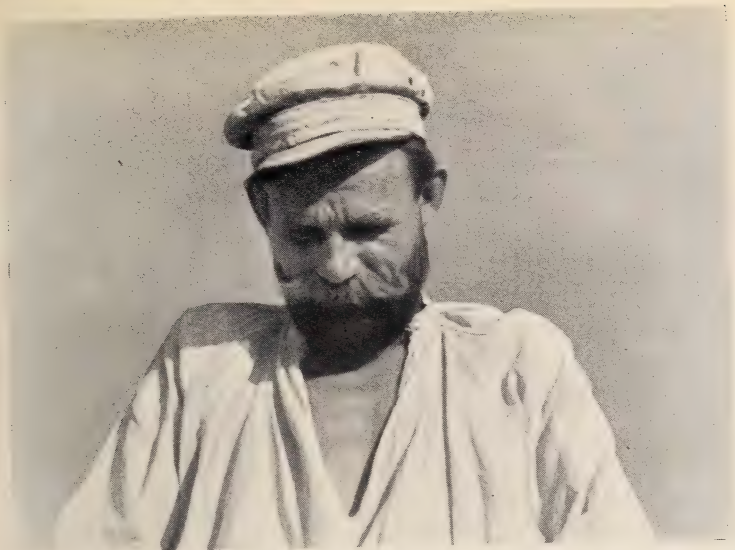
From *The Sovhoz Giant*, a documentary film directed by L. Stepanova for Sovkino.



From *The Silent Don*, Olga Preobrashenskaya's new film. Tzessarskaya, who played a memorable part in *The Women of Riazan* is the leading lady, seen in the above still.



Alexandre Dovshenko, the brilliant director of several Wufku productions. His latest film *Earth* will be shown during the Film Society's coming season.



From *Earth*, Dovshenko's new film.



Hel-Yemen, an ethnographical film made by V. Scherderoff for Meshrapom-Film. Two Jewish boys.

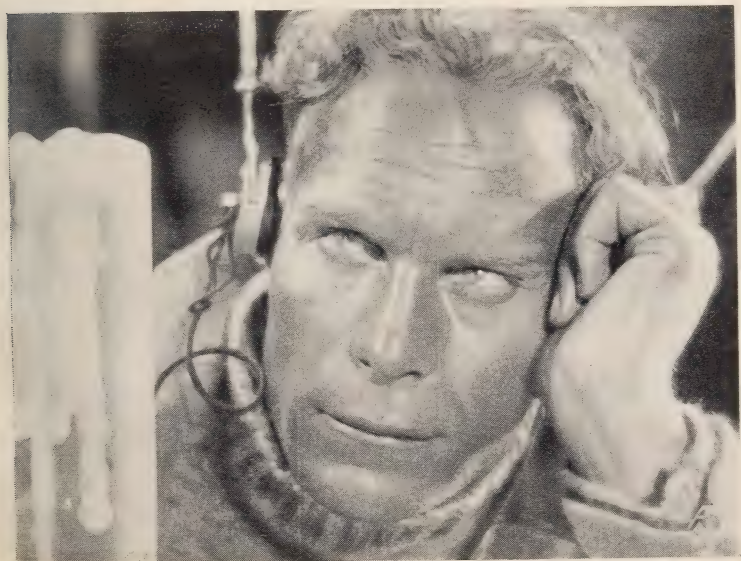


Two studies from the new film by Eugen Deslaw, the final title has not yet been chosen. The name at present is *Etude sur le Robotisme*. It will shortly be presented at the Studio 28.





From Doctor Arnold Fanck's new film, made for Aafa, featuring Leni Riefenstahl, the heroine of *Pitz Palu*. It is entitled *Storm on the Mountain*.





From *Physiopolis*, made by Georges O'Messerly and Jean Dreville—a study in Naturism, taken at the French naturists' camp at Villennes-sur-Seine. This film will also be presented during the winter season.





Doctor Durville, the chief of the Naturist School in France.



From a new Documentaire by Henri Storck, of the Ostend Cine-Club, dealing with the experiences and routine of the Belgian life-boat-men.



From the documentaire of the lifeboat-men of the Belgian coasts,
made by Henri Storck.



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ated I mean that he thinks of his relation to the movie as something which passes beyond the limits of amateurism. He has his eye on the large-scale film. He mimics it, is nostalgic for it, and organizes his groups pompously for the exploitation of his personality and personalities like his. Therefore his films are egregiously histrionic. I recall during my visit to England being made aware of groups with studio-divisions and sub-divisions. I recall a number of terrifying imitations of Sennett and Fritz Lang. In America Eastman Kodak has circulated a "model" film, *Fly Low Jack and Play the Game*, in which the hero runs through a series of sports in William Haines fashion. For these amateurs Marion Norris Gleason has written a book, *Scenario Writing and Producing for the Amateur*, with an introduction by C. E. Kenneth Mees, D.Sc., Hon. F.R.P.S. (Boston: American Photographic Publishing Co.). As Dr. Mees says: "This book has been written to provide a simple and clear account of the construction of a motion picture as a drama. It should be both interesting and valuable to the rapidly increasing army of cinematographers." It is not a bad book of its kind, but it serves the egregious histrionic movie-amateur, and as such it is entirely too esoteric for me, who thinks of amateurism as an interest in the intrinsic film and film as social document. The author has some good instincts, visible in this quotation: "As to the limitations of amateur productions, don't worry about them unless they are very obvious. Limitations often turn out to be creative stimulants; witness the two-by-four stage of the Provincetown Players and their significant contributions to our national theatre. And in the realm of the motion picture amateur, one of the best contributions yet

made to the art of cinematography in this country, Dr. Watson's *Fall of the House of Usher* was produced in a stable fitted with homemade sets and contraptions." There is some good elementary advice, but the chapter-headings will indicate that the author is concerned more with the expression of individuals acting than in the discovery of authentic material, the development of correct attitudes toward social subject-matter, and the cultivation of the aesthetic sincerities:

1. Dramatic Construction of a Scenario.
2. Writing the Scenario Continuity with examples of tedious film-narratives.
3. The Home Movie with similar examples.
4. Children's Scenarios, as original as Rip Van Winkle (never asking just what is legitimate child-in-film stuff).
5. Holiday Scenarios (isn't this social settlement stuff?).
6. Scenarios for Organized Groups.
7. The Experimental Field.
8. Directing Amateur Motion Picture Production.

Chapter 7 on The Experimental Field begins: "It is far outside my province to suggest how the experimenters are to experiment or what the pioneers are to discover." Which aren't the same thing: experiment and discovery. "The whole interest of an experiment lies in the fact that the result is uncertain; the whole adventure of exploring is just that one doesn't know what lies ahead." The trouble here is the author made the typical error of talking about experiment, when she would have done better to talk about principles and variety of cinema kinds. As a matter of fact, she begins to have an inkling of the correct sobriety when she writes: "It is he (the amateur), and not the professional, who is going to put the scenario into its right place—the foremost place that it must have in any great art, or in any real art. After all, it is Shakespeare, not

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Richard Mansfield. . . ." "Scenario-conception" the author says she means, meaning "the message," "the gist," "the idea," not "story-scenario" merely. One would not have known that by her scenario examples. There are scenarios for a talkie and a color film, again not statements of principles to be enacted, but stories to be acted. Not a word or suggestion of the method of cinema unity called "montage." If the author had really thought through what is meant by "scenario-conception" she would have realized that the amateurs to whom her book would go and appeal could not make use of a "conception," for that demands a point of view. The amateur with "conception" will appear among the social-minded, not among the country-club-minded, tea-party amateur of the Gleason society.

* * *

In the June 1930 *Close Up*—in an article written a year previously—I suggested that "the cinema is not so remote from the theatre as dogmatists insist. The cinema has a source in the theatre, the theatre has a source in the cinema." Eisenstein called the motion picture a stage in the development of the theatre. He did not mean that the movie had no character of its own. It is, he believes—as I do with him—a part of the historical continuity of the "show"—the popular amusement. The movie did not defeat the theatre. The latter, as a popular form, is now at its minimum; the movie, as a popular form, is at its maximum. But a form must pass from the rudimentary to the realised, from the popular to the elite, from the ritual to the art. The movie, in its international evolution as cinema, has passed out of the rudimen-

tary. In America it is held at the rudimentary because of the repression of the vital energies that will propel it.

* * *

The first American writers upon the film wrote against it, just as the first writers of the sound film wrote against it as an interloper. In either case the opposition was prompted by a defense of a seemingly threatened art. Walter Pritchard Eaton in 1909 called the movie "canned drama." Other descriptions were: "moving-pictures ad nauseam" (1908); "nickel madness" (1907); "startling development of the bi-dimensional theatre" (1909); "silent stage." (1909). Carl Van Vechten characterized it as "the electrical theatre." The commentators could not see beyond the film's character as a "nickelodeon" (1908) or a "nickel theatre" (1911). The chief preoccupation was a moral one: how would the child be affected? Or a protective one: the "theatre's new rival" (1909). In 1910 Horace M. Kallen wrote the first piece of real film-criticism. It appeared in the *Harvard Monthly*, and strange to say a good deal of our movie-commentary has since issued from the academic precincts of Harvard University. Professor Hugo Munsterberg wrote his book, *The Photoplay* (1916). The *New Republic*, as early as 1915, published an article by Harold Stearns on the films. Kenneth MacGowan was called, in 1917, "the first film critic in America"—he wrote for the *Seven Arts Magazine*. Alfred Kuttner, the only one of these writers to retain an active interest in the cinema, wrote also for the *New Republic*, as did also Gilbert Seldes, another Harvard johnny.

Kallen wrote of the film as a part of the historic continuity of the popular theatre, but was at the same time able to extract

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the distinct qualities of the new form, namely, "concentration and expressiveness."* He, however, inherited the academic limitation of seeing processes as terminated things at the moment of inspection, rather than as forms in evolution. The movie has had few critics who have seen it as a form in evolution. Of all who have written in English, Alexander Bakshy alone has been perspicacious. Kallen could not see the film beyond its rudiments in the melodrama and "churlish comedy."† His attitude was snobbish, patrician, but not inaccurate for the time. The "primitive phenomenon" of the film was as Kallen saw it. He said: "The rival of the musical comedy has appeared and with it a totally new and

* Kallen saw as another distinct characteristic of the movie "rapidity of movement." By this he evidently meant "speed." Critics have insisted upon "speed" as an essential of the film—it is a quality of the "primitive phenomenon." Another characteristic he designated was the "dominant æsthetic paradox," the customary in unaccustomed media. This may be looked upon in two ways: through the eyes of 1910, as seeing the new art treating of the materials of the old and, by this juxtaposition creating an "æsthetic surprise"; or, through the constant eyes of art, as seeing in the film a means of disturbing dessicate logic, in the sense that Eisenstein speaks of the "pathetic treatment of non-pathetic material." So that Kallen has listed three categories of principles: the law of art, the law of the cinema, the law of the film's first form.

† The 1910 attitude toward comedy in the cinema is shared by the German, Professor Konrad Lange, who said in address (1912) before the Dürer Bund in Tübingen that the comic or grotesque film depended entirely upon eccentricity. It could not be compared, he said, to the art of the circus-clown, for the latter spoke once-in-a-while and uttered witty remarks. (It is then the circus-clown is least the artist.) Chaplin had not yet appeared by 1912 to disprove the charge that the film could not carry wit. Both Kallen and Lange saw speechlessness as an obstacle to anything but churlishness in the comic film. To Lange the comic film was a "Schundfilm"—rubbish-film; its humor "Hampelmannhumor," jumping-jack humor. He must have had in mind Mack Sennett's Keystone Kops and Ford Sterling. They were basic, folk jesters.

unexpected force in the theatre, a force that may have enormous power for dramatic good and evil, a force that will moderate and perhaps re-establish on its pristine eminence, the discarded and abased melodrama." Kallen's preoccupation with the pristine was not altogether altruistic—æsthetic that is to say; it was aristocratic, defensive. He wanted the mass to be kept from speculation, for if it were not, something might ensue, something dreadful, like a revolution. This may have been but the aloof air of a young man, but it has served as a principle in the film-industry. The movie has been a fairy-tale and has had its existence as a compensatory mythology. Only a new social mind can stir it to actuality and positive experience.

* * *

The mythological nature of the American movie becomes hideous in the instance when social turbulences are the subject-content. M-G-M has just issued *The Big House*, "inspired" by the recent prison-riots. Since this is the best of the films that followed these explosions it offers the most advantageous of opportunities. Here is certainly a social material. What does it reveal?

The film begins within the prison, begins, that is to say, with a promise of *intensiveness*. But to sustain the intensive there is required a disciplined and rigorous mind, which is not the mind of the American movie. The intensiveness is one of theme and structure. To assure such sustained intensiveness only one thing could suffice: conception. A conception of the theme is lacking. The intensiveness of locale is not maintained. The thief, Morgan, escapes from the infirmary. The story follows him into the city, the bookshop

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of the heroine, the heroine's home. The intensiveness is *relieved*. *Relief* is a constant in the American formula. Not the relief which enhances the tragedy, or the criticism, but which neutralizes it. 'There is further relief in the whimsicality of the machine-gun murderer, Butch, who commits an offense, only to say "I was only kiddin'." With these words he dies after he has attempted to kill his pal, Morgan, whom he has wrongly suspected of squealing. The winsome pathos of hard men. There is much winsomely pathetic relief in Butch's pretended reading of a letter—which he says came from a girl crazy over him—but which Morgan deciphers for the illiterate gangster as the announcement of his mother's death. Sob-hokum according to formula. And the film offers no relief from that.

The burden of the guilt is shifted. The warden forebodingly complains of overcrowding. The film does not convey the sense of that. The film-directors hope to have the dialogue carry the charge, but only the unit-film is vehicle. (The same failure characterized *All Quiet*.) The warden speaks of 3,000 idle men, brooding. They seemed to be having a charming time of it, even though the jailers were tough. They had a cockroach race (see *Journey's End*) which ended in a fight between Butch and Morgan : but that's the holiday spirit, heroics. The genial guard (there must be one such) warns against putting the boy—in for ten years because of running down a man while drunk—with the hardened Butch and Morgan. These are only verbal statements. They do not create, as they should, the basis for the informing *temper*. When Butch, revolted by the food, explodes, provoking the outburst of 3,000 men and his own solitary confinement, the

literalness of the director is apparent. We should be convinced, not by Butch's explosion (which is simply a crude statement, coming from one we should hardly expect to rebel at bad food), but by the food itself; just as the maggotty meat in *Potemkin* was the explanation and argument of the revolt.‡

These are the accusations. But the burden of the guilt is shifted from the prison to the individual, the boy who frames Morgan. Factually, the prison seems to have provided the boy with the instigation to stool-pigeonry. Factually, I say, for though the warden deplors such method, the film does not convey the sense of the social guilt involved in such provocation. The boy is the guilty one. And he is redeemed twice: by his own death in the riot caused by his revealing of the plan to escape and by the stupendous consequence of his framing of Morgan. If he hadn't framed Morgan, Morgan would not have been put into the dungeon, from which he was released feigning illness, to escape from the infirmary. Morgan would not then have called on the boy's sister to wreak vengeance, the two would not have fallen in love, Morgan would not have returned to the prison determined to go straight, would not have saved the prison-guards from massacre, and been pardoned into his sweetheart's arms, which await him outside the gate before a hedge of flowers

‡ To show the international content of American dungeons, *The Big House* includes all the nationalities. These are present in ridicule, the short, baldheaded Jew in spectacles grimacing and twisting his jargon to amuse the customers. This is churlishness in the wrong place. The Swede, portrayed as a stupid loose-jawed glutton by Karl Dane, swills himself on the food which the fastidious Butch discredits. Butch evidently is more refined than his patent idiocy allows. Really, this is much too complicated for simple minds.

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and a sedan. The guilt, whose burden has been shifted from society, vanishes completely.

* * *

Those who believe the true æsthetic attitude is to separate the form from the content will not like my treatment. But the content provides the form by *informing* the structure. An heroic form cannot be constructed of a frivolous content. *The Big House* is shop-competence which, not urged toward scrutiny, does not attempt the instrumental uses which only scrutiny provokes. The intensiveness is not sustained because there was not the mind to sustain it. The approach was frivolous, facetious . . . and the result is not even physically exciting. The mess-room explosion and the riot are too recognizably the elementary formula to excite a reaction or tension. It is all too plausible. Scenes that should be poignant, like the boy's entrance into the supply-department for his prison-garb, provoke snickers. Guffaws are very generous in the audience. The mind of the film and the mind of the audience coincide, it is the mind of that section of America which created the film.

* * *

There is another type of film which is now in vogue. The film of the "restless rich," provided by the popular play and novel. The latest of these is *Holiday*, and since it has most efficiently, all the qualities typical of this sort of film, it is worth looking at. *Holiday* is from the play by Philip Barry, a Harvard 47 Workshop product. It treats of the ineffably rich, about which movie audiences read a lot, but who are no more than invidious creatures of mythology. America's experience of them is a vicarious experience.

Edward H. Griffith is the director of the picture. His *Paris Bound* was another such. Mr. Griffith possesses style. That is an aristocratic virtue, but not a profound one. It is suited to this kind of film, the kind that supposes the narrative of the entanglements of the oppressed rich is a social problem—the problem of art. Of course, such a narrative, penetrated to the social core and referred to the complete motivating process of structure, might become a revelation of society. Henry James approached that, Edith Wharton was less close to it—usually the product of the environment of which the narrative deals has not felt any process organically enough to do more than narrate the story of some individuals within a certain area. The effect is generally of a fabrication, and that is the effect of *Holiday*—veneered, suave, civilized—as that word is used by the people blessed with remoteness and unconcern. The film remains a literary story, a parlor play—it depends wholly upon the actors—and these must not go out of the drawing-room. Smart lines must follow upon each other . . . the gaiety, is it? of the nations, their aristocracy, of course. I can see the wife of the shopkeeper, the twenty-year man-of-the-world (though born of the people), and even the mill-dolly revelling in this whiff from a romantic world. They whiffed it in *The Laughing Lady*, in *Paris Bound*, in *This Thing Called Love* . . . less crude than Clara Bow in *Love Among the Millionaires* . . . and therefore all the more to 'ware of.

I have spoken of processes. Montage is a process. Films like *Turksib* and *Joan of Arc* are processes. The process of the film is, in its evolution toward realization, in the opposite direction from the theatre's development. The theatre is an in-

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tensive medium aspiring to progressiveness. *The cinema is a progressive medium aspiring to intensiveness.* The film came into being when the theatre had reached as far as it could in its progress toward progressiveness—the latter sought to further *cinematize* itself. At this point the two came closest together.

* * *

The failure to recognise the method of montage as an integral process is the explanation of the sad attempts to sovietize films outside of the U.S.S.R. I have had the opportunity of seeing Grierson's *Drifters* at last; and it is the immediate provocation for my statement.

The zeal of the British, and Mr. Grierson himself, have been unfair to *Drifters*. The film does not deserve the anticipation the English comments have caused. As a first job of a young man, it is commendable. As an example of cinematic art, it is far from meritorious. Grierson has said he derived the *energies* of his film from the U.S.A. cinema, the *intimacies* from that of the U.S.S.R. If these could be joined together, the result would be hybrid. Why did Mr. Grierson not seek his energies also in the Soviet kino? Montage is an expression of the energies as well as of the intimacies. That is to say montage is the progression and the intensive unit. Moreover, I suspect that Grierson has defined energies as muscular impact. The American film is a film of muscular impact. It cannot be said to contain anything so plural as energies, for the energies—the creative expressive energies—of the U.S.A. are suppressed. The energies of a film are the energies of a land.

Grierson, it must be said to his credit, sought to re-vitalize

the documentation with a structural intention. Yet he did not bring to his desire for intimacies the scrutiny—the *over-tonal interplay*—which such a re-vitalisation demands. Where are the people in his film? He is more engrossed with the *independent graces* of fish in the water—well-done details in themselves, but no part of the human process which the film was to be. The picture therefore is indeterminate: it is not the straight document such as *Business in Great Waters*, which satisfies its own demands; it is no re-vitalized revelation of human activity.

Nor does the film achieve the simplest of processes: that of accumulative muscular impact. It does not compel response to the fishers, to the sea. The filming of the nets as they are thrown overboard is good—catching them “on the go,” but this too remains an independent grace because it is not integrated in an ascending structure. This was a film intended to show labor. If Mr. Grierson thought to extend it to inferences beyond the facts of toil, to the total economy of exploitation, his attempts at inter-reference between sea and market, fisher and broker, were certainly too inadequate. The intention of labor is not fulfilled.

* * *

I dwell at length upon *Drifters* because of its meaning to America. I have long urged the film-makers to begin with the simple documentary. Instead of seizing a Paul Fejos and putting him on *Lonesome* or *Broadway*, such a young man should be presented with an exercise in documentation. The document is a basis, and the document transfigured is the ultimate work of art in the cinema.

The fishing-trade is of especial interest to me. I have

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planned a film of the fish docks, the "live car" bringing in the live fish from the ponds and streams of midwest and far-west U.S.A. I have followed the fish since swaddling days.

* * *

What do our enthusiastic young men do? H. W. has made a film called *A City Symphony*—an ambitious and reminiscent title. It is a montage-film—if montage means, as it does not, the pell-mell piling of fragments. Herman knew of the use of the negative as positive; so he loaded his film with that utility. Any device has its specific values. Haphazard and dense application of it is disastrous. H. W. should have asked; "What is the pattern and tonal value of this bit of negative in the order of my film?" He employs the negative in instances where its value is lost. For instance, when the locomotive comes in in negative it is nothing but a frozen block. If H. had intended a frozen locomotive, O.K., that would have been ingenuity, but he was after a mobile something—and this was not it. The entire film is unorganized, no pattern, rhythm, formal intention, is apprehended. And as for the photographic work: it is a beginner's. I think of the Lods-Kauffman film, *Aujourd'hui*; it sought parallels of movement, but destroyed the organization of the film by putting too much into it. Not knowing where to end the picture, they terminated it with an *Etc.* And that's how I feel about *A City Symphony*, it's all etcetera. First films like first poems should be writ and discarded: unless the light of inspiration is vivid in them. Paris has spoiled enough novices by professionalizing them. It is the prerogative of the swaddler to swaddle in this basin or that trundle. H. W. could first play in an "excentric" milieu making "stylized"

films. Stylization here means lining one's face with smears and moving like a scarecrow : a mixture of Robert Florey and *Beggar on Horseback*. It is not what it should be : the intensification of a structure, the fantasy of the ordinary-into-the-extraordinary of the Japanese, Nielsen, Hessling, Krauss—the capture of the mean and the construction upon it. Not possessing a complete understanding of the choreographic nature of stylization, the “ excentrics ” (“ excentric ” is their spelling and the word itself exposes the spuriousness of the venture) did not take care that every detail should be “ stylized.” A number of the persons of the drama were not altered a whit from their native pedestrian selves. The film has not been released. I present it as another instance of “ love among the independents.”

H. A. POTAMKIN.

THE CINEMA AND THE CENSORS

In my two years' association with the little film-art theatres in America, I have had occasion to come in contact with various state departments of motion picture censorship, many, many times—due, perhaps, to the fact that these little film-art theatres made a speciality of showing imported films from France, Germany and Russia—where the temperament is

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somewhat different from that of America, and certain institutions, conventions, moral codes and established customs have been looked upon and have been treated in a manner well-calculated in intent and desired effect to upset the decorum of certain puritanical bureaucrats dedicated to the thankless and unholy task of keeping the sexual-stability and political affinities of the native bourgeoisie safe from the contamination of insidious "foreign propaganda."

From a careful resumé of eliminations ordered by them, I should say that they are concerned almost wholly with politics and sex, with the latter having a slight edge on the former as far as cuts have been made.

One thing which has impressed me more than even the gargantuan stupidity, infantilism and sheer philistinism of certain of their actions, is their religious and political intolerance! That it is inconsistent with free-speech, free-thought, religious freedom, etc.—all that which the Constitution of these United States is supposed to guarantee us, is no matter here. It does not exist. And being blind to the facts, resigning one's self to a martyred-complacency, can serve only to strengthen and render apparently "just" the illiterate regression of thought and action that constitutes any such censorship.

A few examples will be pertinent here. You say that we have religious freedom in America, and point to the Pilgrim Fathers coming here in search of it, and I tell you that the Pilgrim Fathers found Indians in America and it was not until "Americans" as such came into power that religious freedom was far from being realised here. A film, *The City Without Jews*, from the novel by Hugo Bettauer, dealing

with the fantastic probability of what might happen to an anti-semitic metropolis, like Vienna, if the Jews were suddenly expelled from the town, was submitted to the N.Y. State Board of Censors. Bettauer, it must be remembered, was assassinated by a fanatical "Nordic" student for daring to think that a city would go to the dogs if the Jews were expelled. The film, in enlightened New York, was, at its first screening, rejected by the censors, and the matter had to be taken to the State Department of Education in Albany before it was finally allowed to be passed, but with so many eliminations of important titles (taken from Bettauer's book) that the whole thing was rendered quite innocuous.

Potemkin, that startling Russian film-document founded on an incident which occurred in the Black Sea in 1905, off the coast of Odessa, which dealt with such conditions as would have made any sailor who still had a spark of manhood left in him revolt, was banned by the Pennsylvania censors on the grounds "that it gave American sailors a blue-print as to how to conduct a mutiny."

Surely peace-loving, anti-militaristic, safe-for-Democracy America cannot be in sympathy with the erstwhile czarist régime before the debacle of the Romanoffs in 1917—yet, why was *Mother*, another Russian film, from a story by Gorki dealing with certain pogroms of 1905 which actually occurred, have been rejected completely? A young boy is arrested by the military police. His mother helps him to escape from prison. He is caught and shot. The mother hurls her maledictions at the institution which sanctioned the shooting of her only boy. What is "wrong" in that?

The Village of Sin, an exposition of the old and new orders

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in Russia as far as sex-bondage of women goes, one of the most moral and high-minded stories the screen has ever told—with all that was wicked and poisonous put to rout at the end and with a civilized kind of virtue triumphant, was banned by the Maryland State Board of Censors on the grounds that it dealt with incest (which it doesn't) and that this sort of goings-on was peculiar to Russia, and that it does not, as a general rule, exist here, and that it would disrupt the sacred institution of marriage in America. One has only to gain the confidence of a judge in any American criminal court to know whether or not such things do not, even as a general rule, exist here. The censors objected to a scene showing pitch on a door of two young people who had been living out of marriage. Yet such a scene was allowed to pass in Vilma Banky's *The Awakening*. They objected to a theme which bordered on incest—and passed *Stark Love* which reeks with it. Consistent? Don't make me laugh!

Hollywood films may be put on exhibitions of all sorts of sexual orgies—yet, here, one may not show a scene of a man kissing a woman on the neck, particularly if it is in a foreign movie. This state actually objected to a scene of a man and woman, seated on a couch, kissing. The film was *The Box of Pandora*, made in Germany. A young boy, with his head lying chastely in a woman's lap, was originally ordered out of this same film. And such frankly pornographic stuff as *The Cock-Eyed World*, the Joan Crawford films, and numerous others of their ilk, are passed without a qualm.

The entire last reel of *The Box of Pandora* was ordered out of this film. Those familiar with Wedekind's play will remember that it deals with Lulu, Wedekind's heroine, the

final essence of the idea; woman, i.e., who has been abundantly charged with sex-consciousness. Insatiable impulses urge her life and challenge her fate. Man's power is eternally contributed to go with this driving impulse. Too soon, everybody is run over, hurled aside, exhausted. Sexuality alone remains—everything else seems lifeless, worthless—and the male succumbs, laughing, forgiving. . . . The last act finds Lulu, having drifted to the slums of London, soliciting in the sordid streets of Whitechapel. She meets a man, invites him to her room, not knowing that he is Jack-the-Ripper, the terror of the Whitechapel district. There is an incredibly lovely and wonderfully sensitive scene between Lulu and Jack-the-Ripper wherein the latter is shown in a human and sympathetic light as they muse over a sprig of holly and a single candle (it is Christmas Eve). Lulu draws Jack to her and the latter, accidentally catching sight of a knife on the table, is once more cruelly brought back to his peculiar pathological aberration and while embracing her with one hand, he thrusts the knife in her back with the other.

Of course this is "strong" stuff—it is also adult stuff. It does not glorify Lulu nor the sordid life she leads bringing destruction to everyone including herself. Wedekind for all his sensationalism was very much of a moralizer and *Pandora's Box*, *Earth-Spirit*, *Spring's Awakening*—all wind up with a high-minded moral at the end. However, the censors cannot see further than their blue-noses. To them things exist for their own sake. The end does not justify the means. They cannot see it—or they refuse, for some unknown reason, to see it. This entire sequence in *Pandora's Box* was rejected. It so happened that the German makers of this film, antici-

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pating trouble from the censors on this score, had provided the film with a second and "happy" ending showing Lulu following a Salvation Army band to a new and better life. This was the ending which was passed and shown in both New York and Maryland. I have the statement of a noted psychiatrist, Dr. Henry Stack Sullivan, of the Shephard Pratt Hospital in Maryland, that the film *Pandora's Box* (which I showed him before the censors cut it) was psychologically sound and one of the most powerful things he had ever seen.

The morning sun creeping through the latticed windows up the legs of a woman lying in bed asleep was ordered elimination from a film, *Three Loves*, which I presented in Baltimore. This was done on the grounds of immorality! John Gilbert may slobber all over Greta Garbo's mouth when kissing her, yet a harmless bit of showing a man chastely kissing a woman on the neck for a second or two, was considered immoral and ordered out of another film, *The Royal Scandal*—probably on the grounds that these foreign ways of kissing were entirely perverse! A sequence in a Ufa educational film dealing with the reproduction of some of the most minute forms of animal, plant and undersea life was ordered elimination by the New York Censors, also because these scenes were immoral and that the sex-act must not be shown under any circumstances even if it concerns fishes and amoebae because sex is associated with pleasure and they cannot conceive of the distinction between sex for pleasure and sex for procreation! And the censors are grown men and women, mind you, and profess to be well acquainted with "all the facts of life." It is in cases like these that they

set themselves down as evil-minded, obscene inquisitors, so altogether low-minded that it staggers the imagination to encompass even a small portion of the idiocies perpetrated by them in whose name God and the intelligent man or woman only knows!

The censors should be made to explain why, for instance, so frankly a cheap sexy film like *Hell's Island* was passed in New York, or why that foul-smelling opus, *Unguarded Girls* was allowed to be shown in New York with ballyhooing more fit for a brothel than a movie theatre. Until such satisfaction is received I cannot see that there is any hope at all that the situation will be bettered.

There is the case of the British pacifist film, *High Treason* which deals with the outbreak of the next war and shows how that war is averted by the assassination of the President of Europe (the action is laid in 1940) by the president of a Peace League. It was passed intact in Maryland—yet barred in New York. All that the film said was that there must not be another war for it will be too terrible and will destroy the world. All differences must be settled by arbitration. There must be peace on earth, good-will among mankind. Surely these are Christ-like utterances. What are the censors afraid of? Or is it politics? Yet the sad case remains. Twelve years after the last carnage was ended and peace propaganda is still looked upon with disfavour. True, *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Journey's End*, brave attempts in this direction, were passed. Then why discriminate? Why, indeed? That is the all-pervading question—why?

One can remain indifferent to stupidity only as long as it does not interfere with one's personal ideals and liberty.

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Censorship of this sort is a flagrant denial of such ideals and liberties. It is like prohibition. No one wants it—yet it is foisted on everybody.

One could go on forever enumerating myriads of examples of censorship actions. However, let it suffice here to sum it up in a few words. Upon throwing the statement at the censors once; "Doesn't such and such a thing actually exist in real life?" I was told that if they did, that was no reason why we must show such things. Evidently the truth hurts, and cuts deep at that. We must delude ourselves. This is the best of all possible worlds and everything is as it should be or it would have been ordained differently by the Creator.

We must say "No!" to life. We must be complacent and lethargic. We must not think for ourselves. We must submit to the thinking of others — assuming, of course, that "The others" *can* think at all. Even if they can't, it makes no difference.

Censorship would be amusing if it were not so painful. It is insanely inconsistent and altogether pathological in its motivations. I have spoken to physicians, noted "obscenity" lawyers and psychiatrists on this subject, and with them, every instance of sex censorship as applied in the cases I set before them, became a case for Freud or Kraft-Ebing.

How can the movies ever completely grow-up if there is a pre-censorship of what can and what cannot be filmed in Hollywood? And if the action of the censors here discourages the European producers from filming mature scenarios or sending them here (for fear that they will be banned and their influence lost).

HERMAN G. WEINBERG.

MOTION PICTURES IN THE CLASSROOM

The question whether the film could and should be used as an instrument of instruction, has often been raised. It is understood that where dynamic relations, motion, life, have to be shown and explained, the motion picture cannot be excelled nor replaced by any other visual aid. There are a number of schools where films are shown now and then, short documentary films, that happen to fit more or less into the programme of the class, but the film has not yet found its way into the classrooms as a regular aid and contribution to instruction. This is partly due to the immense costs which are involved in the production and showing of films, partly to a certain scepticism and conservative attitude of the teachers concerning the problem. Will the value of these contributions really surpass the difficulties and disadvantages of showing films? Will the pupils not be diverted from abstract thinking? Won't it take too much time? "Let us try!" said some American experts of teaching and in co-operation with the representatives of a big firm that produces film-material, they prepared an experiment on a large scale. The report of this investigation is assembled with great careful-

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ness in a very interesting volume, *Motion Pictures in the Classroom* (an experiment to measure the value of motion pictures as supplementary aids in regular classroom instruction) by *Ben D. Wood*, Columbia University and *Frank N. Freeman*, University of Chicago (published by the Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston).

The experiment was initiated by the Committee on Visual Instruction (appointed by the National Education Association) in co-operation with the Eastman Kodak Company. All the Film material and apparatus were contributed by the Eastman Kodak Company who also paid for the production of the films and other expenses. About 11,000 school-children and 200 teachers in twelve widely separated cities of the U.S.A. participated in the experiment during twelve weeks in the spring of 1928. The films used were made on standard narrow width—16 mm. safety stock, and projected on Koda-scope Model A projectors.

It was the aim of the investigation "to learn what contributions twenty teaching films might make when used as a regular and integral part of classroom work." For this purpose twenty films were especially photographed after the scenarios planned by teachers who had great experience in their work. There was a set of ten films with geographical topics, another set dealing with topics of General science. Each film is divided into sections each forming a unit, which takes about fifteen minutes to be projected. There are very few subtitles used, but there is a special teachers' guide for every film, with a short description of the units and indications as to the direction in which the pupils' attention is to be drawn. The films were not to supplant words, nor to

revolutionise the instruction, but to represent an addition to the usual means of instruction, a supplementary aid. They were not made in the manner of satisfying entertainment films, nor do they give an immediate answer to the questions they raise; their aim is to rouse interest, to provoke questions, and to stimulate the student to thinking and working on his experience. Among the topics of the general scientific films there is one on *Atmospheric Pressure*, another *Water Cycle*, *Planting and Care of Trees*, the geographical films deal with *Cotton Growing*, *Cattle*, *New England Fisheries—Cod*, etc.

Now the question was how to measure the effectiveness of these film-contributions. One must say that the leaders of the investigation treated this problem in the most careful, thorough, cautious and impartial way, handling a tremendous apparatus of statistics, tests, correlation-calculations, questionnaires, tables, lists, diagrams. You will find every detail, the minute prescriptions for the teachers and pupils, the descriptions of the topics and all the tests and figures in the excellent report by Ben D. Wood and Frank N. Freeman, mentioned above. We must limit ourselves to roughing out the essential proceedings of the experiment.

The pupils were divided into two groups, one of which was taught *with* the aid of the Eastman Films, the other group, fairly equal in number, age, sex, general ability, and school achievement, was taught *without* films, as a Control Group. About 7,500 pupils were in Geography classes, and 3,500 in General Science Classes. All the pupils were tested (1) in the beginning of the experiment, to compare the experimental and the control classes, (2) by another set of questions in the

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beginning and end of the experiment, to find out the relative gains, (3) at the end of the investigation for the comparison of the final achievement. These series of tests, called the "Comprehensive" tests, consisted in true-false statements, multiple-choice questions, and two-answer questions. There was another series of tests, "Topical Tests," more like an essay, in which the pupils had greater freedom to express themselves individually. Both series, which were planned and carried through independently from one another, gave the same result.

The result of the investigation was very much in favour for the instruction with the aid of films. For 61 per cent. of the pupils in Geography and 59 per cent. in General Science excelled the average of the Control Group. Also the great majority of the teachers in the Experimental classes kept a positive attitude toward teaching with motion pictures.

As to the quality of the achievements it was stated, that concrete knowledge was promoted more by the films than knowledge of abstract facts, or ability for generalisation.

This experiment is most important as the first great and official step in the movement of making the film a regular part of instruction. And it is to be hoped that it will increase and overcome all the difficulties of organisation—and not only in America.

TRUDE WEISS.

RE-READING OLD FRIENDS

Soon all films will be talkies. (At this point the old orchestra at the Avenue Pavilion would have emitted some cymbal crashes.)

The virtuous circle of the movies. *Soon all films will be talkies* would have been revolutionary in, say, Iris Barry's *Let's Go to the Pictures*. (Soon all talkies will be films.)

Now is a last chance to flick over pages of volumes which have influenced the past. For example, *The Art of the Moving Picture* by Vachel Lindsay. First published in 1915; reprinted in revised form in 1922. Obscure Griffith productions discussed, accentuating, maybe, the acuteness of vision which glimpsed the elasticity of bronze sculpture in the cowboy on horseback.

Dandy to talk about sculpture-in-motion: the power of many scenes depending on the fact that if the film is stopped suddenly one can find a monumental quality in the grouping. "The eye makes its journey, not from space to space, or fabric to fabric, but first of all from mass to mass." (Critics still serve this up as fresh.) Dandy to talk about painting-in-motion: there are effects of light irradiant from some sparkling head dress, patterns of space relating to definite

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conventional triangular compositions in dress and figure, tones and shades adjusted in space, time units of smoke and tossing sails which can be orchestrated into silent symphonies of different speeds.

In 1915 Mr. Lindsay wrote.

“ The music of silent motion is the most abstract of moving picture attributes and will probably remain the least comprehended.” And the obsession that actors are hieroglyphics, dolls, that actors are a personal application of their background. Fairy tale architecture may amount to an incantation, but in ordinary drama the student will be sceptical about the enormous importance that V.L. gives to his non-human textures, spaces and lines.

(What a *shime* he did not know the words “ motographic ” and “ imagegraph.”)

The Mind and the Film by Gerard Fort Buckle; the nearest thing in English to French film criticism. Not mimical. Justifications for the fade, the dissolve, the iris, tinting, moving cameras, colour and stereoscopic photography.

The fade—says Mr. Buckle, “ shaping his work to the needs of a psychological treatise ”—is equivalent to the closing of a human eye; from this the importance of a rapid as opposed to a slow fade-out. The human eye, closed suddenly, imprints the last object noted on the mind; in other words there is a loss of the power to control thought movement. It is a serious thing if, through injudicious use of the fade, the producer kills the thought movement completely. By reducing the thought movement to a minimum flow a subject can be diverted into the subconscious mind, leaving the conscious mind ready for a new problem.

The dissolve is considered as "suspended action," a psychological device for heavy scenes . . . Voilà! A heroine returns from a fateful walk with her lover. She has to face her brother's eyes. By a series of dissolves the director attempts to avoid breaking the dramatic tension. "For a moment life seems to have stopped; and this, following on top of a scene of life and action, previously flashed off, left the human brain in startling reality—what a combination of the uses of the dissolve and flash!"

Lighting Mr. Buckle rightly regards as a most important aid to the mind. In great moments of emotion we are no longer aware of time and place and lighting can be used to lift a character right out of the set. Emotions are thus made of paramount importance. Correct treatment of lighting can only be obtained by considering the whole picture; for a person's life is made up of light and shade. Why overlight a corner of a person's life when that corner happens to be in shade? Not all scenes should be drably lit, or all sets flooded with light. Correct lighting moulds the picture.

Angles should be changed when the viewer has been sufficiently stimulated for the brain to concentrate and cause the eye to accommodate; when the subonscious focus (at infinity) changes to the conscious focus. At the same time, the author does admit that the superimposition of angle shots does produce the illusion of perspective.

A lot of it is so true that it might be pilfered for a new article. Indeed, haven't I just done something like that?

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

BLOCKHEADS

Some of the "wizards" of Wardour Street are so astute that they are losing a first class opportunity of adding to their ill-gotten gains at the expense of the cinema-going public—in the Provinces at least.

There used to be a very popular song some years ago which asked a rather inane question—"Where do flies go in the winter-time?" I am seriously thinking of writing another which, since it asks a very sensible question, ought to be an even greater "hit." Its title will be "Where do good films go in the summer-time?"

I know many Provincial cinema-goers—I cannot speak of London in this respect—who are very anxious to hear the answer to that question. I know it, but I am afraid it will not help them to find the good films, simply because these are hidden in the vaults of Wardour Street awaiting the time of the year when all the flies so mysteriously disappear.

As a provincial critic I make it my business to see as many films as possible. On an average I go to the cinema four times a week, not including trade shows. During the last few months, however, I have not been once a week, and at one period at least a fortnight passed without my seeing a single film.

Every week I recommend to my readers certain films

among the coming attractions for the district, as being distinctly above the average and well worth the expenditure of their hard earned shillings. Lately I have been at my wits' end which films to mention. On ninety-five per cent. of the films shown in the district where I live, I would not have spent one of my own shillings or one and sixes, let alone have been rash enough to advise others to spend their's.

The blunt truth of the matter is that the Provinces are not getting a square deal from the big-wigs of Wardour Street. They seem to be under the impression that simply because occasionally we have a warm day during this wretched summer of ours, nobody wants to go to the cinema. As for those who are mad enough to do so, well, they can take pot luck and, what does Wardour Street care if nine times out of ten those people are thoroughly annoyed that they have wasted time and money?

Frankly, it is not good enough. Provincial audiences have as much—and more—right to be considered, as London audiences. If it was only in London that people went to see films the cinema industry would speedily "feel the draught." It is the provincial cinema-goer who foots the greater part of the bill and he has a right to a say in what the tune shall be, otherwise he will be perfectly justified in refusing to pay.

The cinema world is not exactly notorious for an inferiority complex, but in this case it seems definitely to be afraid. We hear complaints about bad business during the summer months. "People don't want to go into cinemas when it is fine and warm. They want to be out in the country, playing cricket or tennis, or to be on the river." That is their line of argument.

CLOSE UP

Well, what else can they expect? There is no inducement to go to the cinema. There is not one film in twenty released during the summer that is worth seeing.

I thought it was a truism of the business world that when trade is bad business men should make special efforts to improve it. Does the cinema? Of course, it doesn't. It simply says "Well, we can't help it. We'll just have to wait until winter and then people will have to come to see our films whether they want to or not."

It is unfortunate that these "business" blockheads come by their money so easily. If only people showed a little more independence and retorted "If you won't send us good films in the summer we won't come and see your good films in the winter" there would be a speedy change of front.

It is not playing the game and I am amazed that an industry which is noted for its enterprise—not to say cheek—in trying to obtain publicity, should accept so calmly and indifferently the competition of open air pursuits, without lifting a hand or raising a voice in retaliation. They have succumbed without a shadow of a fight.

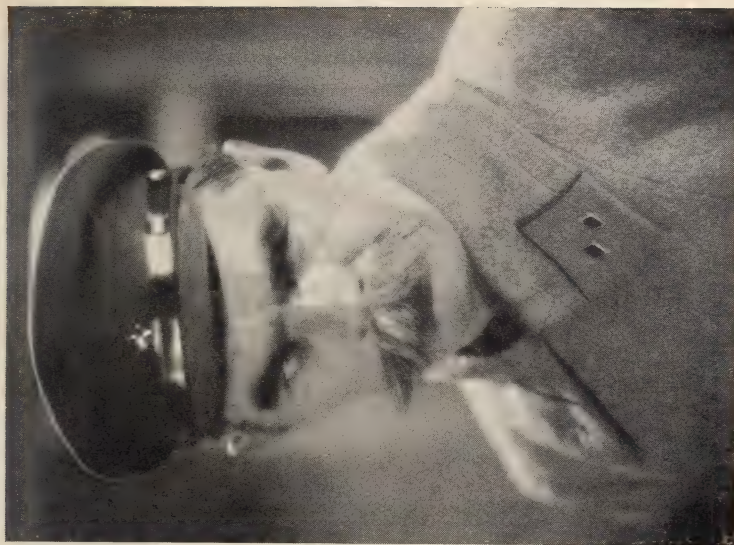
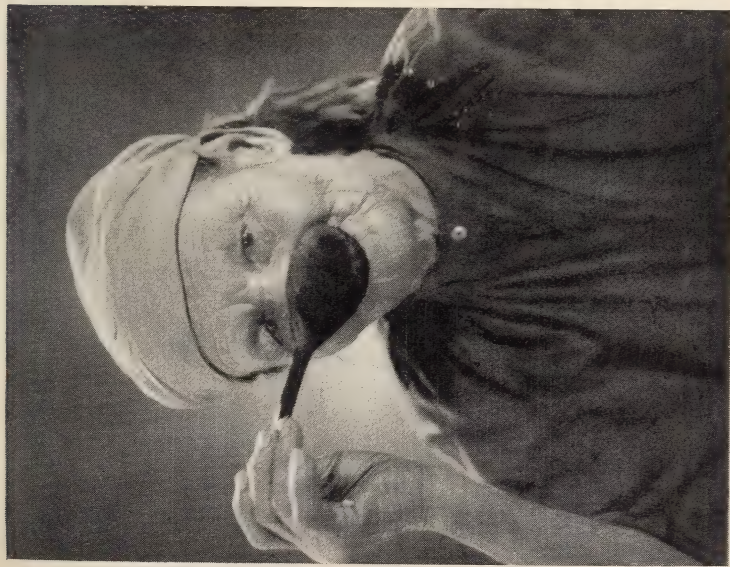
What is to be done about it? Nothing I suppose, like all the proposed reforms in the cinema world, such as the censorship. Films have secured such a hold in the favour of the public that they cannot keep away. They go week in and week out no matter what the films shown—like a flock of sheep and with only a little more intelligence.

Let the mighty men of Wardour Street, however, beware that some day they do not cast aside that clothing and reveal themselves as wolves.

LESLIE B. DUCKWORTH.

CONRAD VEIDT

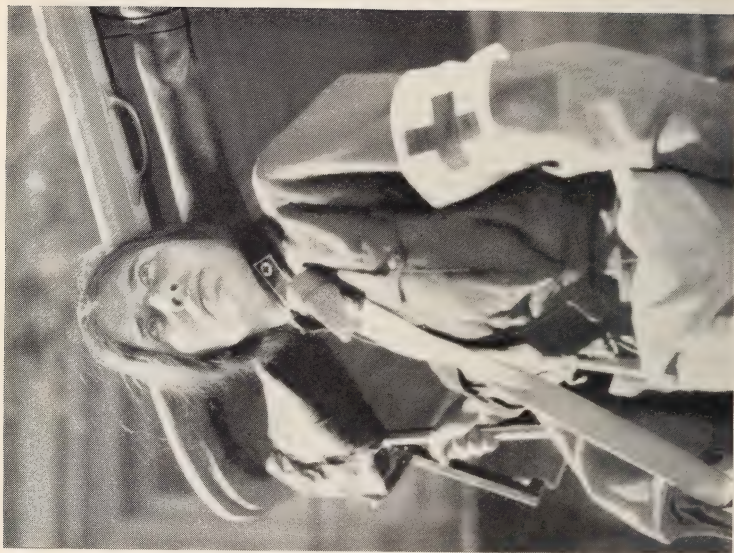
Conrad Veidt . . . *Nju, The Student of Prague, Caligari, Waxworks* . . . he did those so well, and now they are dead, now we have passed beyond them, one expected to find Conrad Veidt standing for something that was dead. But he does not stand for it at all. He is very much alive. I saw him at Elstree, working on the German version of Dupont's *Cape Forlorn*, with Fay Compton hovering typistically about. When you meet Veidt, you do not meet the nervous piano player of *The Hands of Orlac*, you look in vain for the famous bulging vein in the forehead, for you talk to someone exceedingly genial, someone who seems far too well, someone who surprises you by being tall and broad. And the screen Veidt seems a kind of a caricature. This is his third talkie. The first was *The Land Without Woman*. The second *The Last Company*. In the English version of this latter, his voice is doubled by an English actor, who went specially over to Berlin, and after Veidt had "silently," in what he called "his bad English," spoken the English words, the Englishman recorded them in synchronisation. It was successful, but Veidt is not anxious to repeat it. It is too difficult, after he has got the feeling of a part, for someone else to try and get that feeling into someone else's voice.



From Pudovkin's film, *Life is Good*. On right, Chistiakoff, who played the part of the father in *Mother*.



A Production still from *Life is Good*. The cameraman for Pudovkin's unfinished film is Kabalov. Assistant : Strunnikov. Scenarist : Rzheshhevsky.



Life is Good. Leading role : Marie.



Life is Good. Pudovkin at work with his operator, Kabalov.
Photo by Strunnikov.



Discussing a shot for *Life is Good*. Pudovkin in contemplation.
Photo by Strunnikov.



From *Chez les Mangeurs d Hommes* (*Among Cannibals*), a film by Lugeon and Antoine.





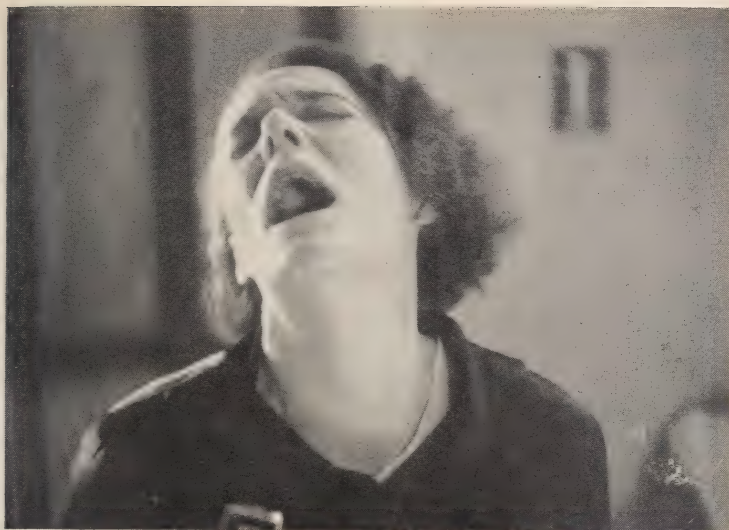
From *The Beauty Prize*, the French talkie with Louise Brooks, the scenario of which was written by René Clair.



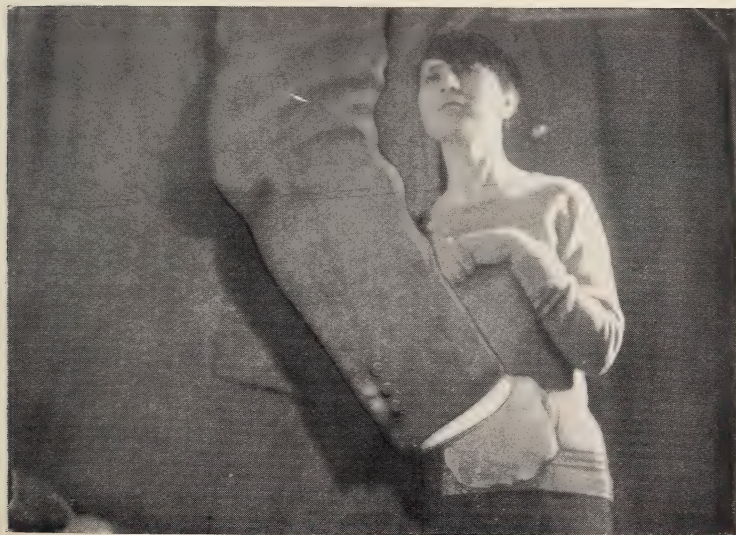


From *Borderline*, a Pool Film by K. Macpherson, featuring Paul Robeson.





From *Borderline*.





Borderline, a Pool Film featuring Paul Robeson. Below, Eslanda Robeson, who plays opposite her husband.



CLOSE UP

And he is not anxious to go on repeating. Of *Caligari* he said "Yes, when we had made that, the producers, those who had put up the money, saw it; they looked at Wiene, and at me, they looked at all of us and they said we were mad. And the film was a terrific success. But one cannot repeat that, one cannot do that again." He said the same about talkies; you cannot get over the trouble of having your language spoken by people with a foreign accent by such happy chance as gave Garbo *Anna Christie* and Jannings *The Blue Angel*. That does once, but you cannot go on doing that. He himself is resigned to becoming a national talkie actor, after years of international fame. And he does not mind. "There never was a silent cinema," he said "you never got scenarios written ("shaped" as C.A.L. would say) for miming only, you never got actors who had a really silent technique; they talked, they spoke, and you did not hear them, that was all. Chaplin was only an exception. So of course I like talkies, they have given us what we had not and were trying to make up for." He added, though, that talkies themselves do not know what they should be any more than the silent cinema did. "The accent in talking pictures must be on the "picture," and listen . . . the photography must be plastic, because the voice is plastic, you see; it is rounded; hard photography will not do."

"It is wonderful," said a man at B.I.P. "how these Germans work things out," as if it were something quite outside what they need do. Herr Veidt gives you the idea of knowing what he is doing, and of going straight ahead. "I believe in everything," he said when I told him of television. "So many things have happened these last few twenty years,

I say "Yes" when you tell me of anything to-morrow." So he hasn't stopped. He isn't still walking sadistically along crooked roofs in black tights. He believes in what is being done, in television, in flying—though he hates it—in night life. His geniality and his enthusiasm, together with his unexpected robustness, make him seem young and eager. He is amused, and he knows where he is "because you never know." He liked Hollywood. "It had sun all day, I had a nice house and a swimming pool, there were flowers, and one thought it was paradise. One talked of oil and cars and pictures. But after a little one said "Well, I would like to talk of something else now," and one could not." But "studios are studios everywhere, there is no difference, and the best studio is the one that gives you most money, that is all." He confessed that though he likes talkies, film acting is harder than the stage, which he still carries on. On the stage, you can work out your part, get the feeling and carry it to the peak. But beginning again and again in a film, you have to start again and again with the feeling; the strain is greater. Nevertheless, after finishing in *Cape Forlorn* on a Friday, he begins in Berlin a talkie under Kurt Bernhardt the next Monday, so he seems able to withstand the strain. I should add that Herr Veidt injects his conversation with "Sures" and "O.K.'s" which I have not attempted to reproduce. "You see, I do not speak English, only the language I picked up in Hollywood."

ROBERT HERRING.

DOVJENKO ON THE SOUND FILM

(In an interview with R. Bond.)

The cinematographic art has accomplished the first chapter of its history as the art of the silent cinema and it enters now on the second phase of its development which is marked by the introduction of the element of sound.

The technical improvements which have evolved in the course of this year and the enormous sums that have been spent on it have completely changed the physiognomy of the screen. They have made it more expressive and more impressive. No doubt in three or four more years the screen to which we have been accustomed will no longer be able to give place to all the cinematographic requirements. It is possible that this development will destroy the screen and that the screen will give way to a screenless cinema in which the spectator will be in a position to receive the film as if he had been placed in the centre of the cinematographic action. In this direction there are boundless prospects for the cinema, especially if we take into consideration the new technique of television, which allows the reproduction of every film in every place.

However, today the talking films still present a large

number of deficiencies and one of the most important and most menacing for the growth of true cinematographic culture is the language—the spoken word.

Trying to solve the problems of reproduction of the spoken word in the cinema along the line of least resistance, the film directors have filled the films with dialogue, making thus out of the sound film talking films rivaling the worst specimens of bad theatre. As a result the film became undynamic and slow and at the same time the predomination of the word in the sound film has brought to it a new element of nationalism. It is destroying the cinematography of small countries and it is complicating the production of films by creating the necessity to have several variations of each film for each separate country. At the same time all the sounds of nature which are not less rich and not less expressive than the human voice are still left outside the screen.

The Soviet cinema entered the production of sound films after America and Western Europe. We have not yet sufficient apparatus for shooting sound films, neither have we enough sound screens. The reason for this is that our resources are taken up with the more pressing needs of our construction. Another reason is that the organisation of our cinema has as its centres not so much the big cities as the whole country with its outlying districts so that the reconstruction of all the screens in the Soviet Union must take some more years of work. However, we are now conducting an investigation into the possibilities of the sound film and of experiments with it. In a short time, probably, the Soviet sound films will make their appearance on the European film

CLOSE UP

market and will be able to show a new departure in the application of sound.

At the present time we are working on the production of a film that could be understood by everybody, regardless of the differences of language. We have to find the right place of the word in the sound film and the part which it has to play in it, also as far as the quantity of the spoken element is concerned. The human word must be brought to perfection, but silence also must be used in the film, and the word and the music should not be used for the sake of the music, or for the sake of giving to the actor an opportunity of producing a song.

The doors must be wide open to the screen for the sounds of the world and the most important is to find the right principles for the combination of the visible montage with the audible montage. The first necessity is to come to the clear understanding of what the sound film is. The sound is a reality, but in the sound cinema it cannot be simply reproduced. It must be created anew.

(Mr. Dovjenko has been visiting London and studying the talkie situation here. His latest production, *Earth* will be presented in London shortly.—R.B.)

SOUS LES TOITS DE PARIS!

Un titre délicieux pour un film qui ne l'est pas moins ! René Clair affirme d'œuvre en œuvre un talent toujours plus assoupli, une manière d'expression qui, dans la recherche des signes visuels, la mise en valeur délicate du détail, marque une manifeste progression. *Le Chapeau de Paille D'Italie* pouvait s'entendre reprocher son inspiration théâtrale, quand bien même, de toute évidence, l'espace y regagnait ses droits. Une telle réserve ne peut être formulée à l'égard de la récente réussite de Clair : c'est cinéma, indubitablement, et de plus, cinéma intégral 1930, c'est à dire, images, rythme et sons.

Nous n'avons pas si souvent que cela l'occasion de prôner les talkies, en général, et les parlants français, en particulier. Nous ne laisserons pas échapper celle qui nous est offerte aujourd'hui.

Si nous examinons tout d'abord la matière du récit cinégraphique, également imaginé par René Clair, nous ne pouvons nous défendre d'un sentiment très naturel de jouissance intellectuelle, car il y a là, comme dans *Les Heures de Cavalcanti*, auxquelles un exquis *Rien Que* s'ajoutait, une observation prodigieusement éveillée des mille et une manifestations de la rue, dont seule l'imagination du poète sait extraire,

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malgré la lassitude de l'uniformité, l'âme collective ou individuelle. Cela commence, pour le spectateur, exactement comme une banale distraction offerte au passant désœuvré . . . un groupe de badauds fait le cercle autour d'un chanteur des rues . . . répète avec lui le refrain, sans beaucoup d'entrain, parce que cela change tout de même un peu du potage journalier. Une fille se joint nonchalamment aux curieux . . . un lascar refait en douce les sacs à main . . . où donc est l'appareil de prise de vues? partout et nulle part, il ne tient pas en place et tandis que se répètent les interminables couplets de *Sous Les Toits de Paris*, nous jetons un coup d'œil amusé dans les logis diversément habités d'un immeuble. Nonchalance des démarches, joie passive inscrite sur les physionomies . . . et les minutes s'écoulent, ainsi, la pellicule ne mesure pas son métrage . . . Sans en avoir autrement le pressentiment, nous avons fait ainsi connaissance avec un peu tout le monde et, ce qui est mieux, deviné, grâce aux concises indications psychologiques, " ce qui cuit dans la marmite " de chacun. Nous nous en tiendrons au chanteur des rues (Préjean) à la fille (Pola Illery) au copain (Greville) et au marlou (Modot); mais, visiblement, nous n'eussions pas dédaigné de suivre tel ou tel type auxiliaire, dont, au reste, l'on ne perd que par intermittence, le contact. Et entre les personnages précités s'établit un commerce très spectaculaire et des échanges d'amitié, de désir, de courage, de peur, ou simplement d'ennui, dont la vie journalière est tissée. Alors quoi, un film réaliste, tout simplement? Mais oui, un film réaliste, qui, au surplus, fait apparaître l'artifice d'innombrables réalismes cinégraphiques. L'essentiel, n'est-il pas vrai, c'est que le chanteur des rues, le marlou, le co-

pain et la fille, soient ni plus ni moins qu'eux-mêmes et ne visent qu'à exprimer leur rôle avec un naturel abandon. Tous les acteurs, sans exception, n'y ont pas manqué.

Reste la forme sous laquelle l'image est rendue, pour ainsi dire, à la réalité, c'est à dire conçue en son exécution de telle sorte qu'elle n'éveille aucune sensation d'apprêt. Il y faut une certaine adresse, à ce jeu qui ne consiste, somme toute, qu'à créer sans laisser percer la volonté même de créer, à montrer sans ostentation ce que l'on entend tout de même imposer à l'attention du spectateur. Et René Clair excelle, plus qu'aucun autre à "indiquer," avec la forme, le mouvement, en eux-mêmes déjà visuellement attrayants, l'intention latente, l'énergie passive mais en éveil, l'idée, pour tout dire, qui habite passagèrement les personnages.

Il y a, deplus, dans sa manière de traiter l'accompagnement sonore, une certaine pondération déjà, qui ne s'observe pas si communément. Et bien que le chant forme la base constante d'expression sonore, il s'en faut de beaucoup que sa répétition suscite la monotonie, car les nuances, ici, entretiennent la variété.

FREDDY CHEVALLEY.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

PERSONAL VIEWPOINT.

We are sent to school as children; is that why education is confused with childishness?

CLOSE UP

At the Exhibition of Mechanical Aids to Learning, the talking shorts we happened to hear made us realise that education beyond the child stage is, in England, forbidden to us : it is called propaganda and banned !

Then, those interested in visual education are obviously supposed to be above the attractions of showmanship. We climbed many stairs to see a special daylight screen. The manufacturers, also, had taken the trouble to carry the screens up all those stairs. Yet, they demonstrated with dirty lantern slides. And nobody could be troubled to select slides (even if soiled) of reasonable intelligence.

There were more encouraging moments. Western Electric gave us a strip of sound film (good publicity matter) ; Visual Information Service introduced us to a Unit Portable Lantern with slides (costing a penny each) which are mounted in a strip and which can be made up, from the lecturer's own material, for a charge of three pence per picture ; and television was represented.

But mechanical education is such a vital subject. To put it tactfully, all six hundred had blundered.

O. B.

FLIP THE FROG.

Because *Flip the Frog*, the new series by U.B. Iwerks, is being presented by a new renting house we would like to be able to say, " More from one of the creators of *Mickey Mouse* and honkey dory, boys."

The truth is, though, that these cartoonists have one

special idea in their nuts and they can't forget. After a morning of cartoons a critic begins to pray that he may never again have to see an exactly synchronised picture. They should have made one series, on the synchronised principle, and then gone on to something else.

Of course, after moonlight and honeysuckle, they are a rest; but the cartoonists can't serve it up hot on a plate *ad infinitum*. O. B.

DESLAW'S LATEST.

Eugene Deslaw, creator of *The March of the Machines*, *La Nuit Electrique* and *Montparnasse*, has just completed a study upon the gradual mechanisation of mankind, the title of which will most probably be *Humain Mecanique*.

Almost entirely laying aside the double exposures and trick-photography to be found in much of his other work, Deslaw demonstrates with a frank simplicity though with a sometimes cruel humour that Man is tending to become entirely mechanised.

By a cunning *mélange* of almost human objects with almost mechanical human beings, one is hypnotised and impressed by Deslaw's theory that "human must go."

Humain Mecanique will very shortly be presented in Paris and, it is hoped, also in London, after which Eugene Deslaw will complete *Negative*, an interesting essay on the curious effects obtainable by the projection of negative film. Not the first time that negative has been directly projected, but the first complete film told entirely in terms of negative.

CLOSE UP

" Black light can exist " proves Deslaw, and the negative sequences such as the black sun between white trees or startling negative reflections upon water testify that such an essay neither lacks beauty nor yet need lack originality.

C. E. S.

EDUCATIVE EXHIBITION.

Guided by the announcement in September *Close Up* we visited the Exhibition of Mechanical Aids to Learning, which the British Institute of Adult Education arranged in London.

On seeing such a varied array of apparatus (the greater part being of British manufacture) all ideal for educational purposes, one wonders all the more *why* so little use has been made of such apparatus in English schools and colleges.

R.C.A. Photophone demonstrated a portable sound-film projector enabling film *and* lecture to be carried from house to house! Messrs. Kodak gave a programme of 16mm. educational films: their explanatory film on Relativity is so cleverly contrived that one leaves with the feeling of having mastered all Einstein's theories. There is perhaps the danger of " a little knowledge. . . "

There were signs of the growing popularity of Epidiascopes, which project opaque objects in their natural colours. An English firm exhibited Filmslides, which are still pictures on standard non-inflammable cine-film and which afford the most economical and convenient method of illustrating group talks and general class-work. (Vide programme.) Mr. Ritchie Lennie of Glasgow demonstrated his highly ingenious though somewhat cumbersome " Anti-dark " (Daylight)

Screen and Tunnel, which enables inflammable film to be safely and clearly projected in broad daylight.

Also Television—and in wonder we watched and heard an image and a voice being transmitted from Long Acre to Houghton Street.

Amongst the numerous lectures and demonstrations given during the course of the exhibition were programmes of Educational talking-films arranged by the W.E. and the R.C.A. Companies, also a Demonstration Class conducted by Mr. Ronald Gow, who is to-day quite celebrated for the films he has made with the collaboration of the pupils at Altrincham County School.

Praise to the Adult Educationalists.

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

EXHIBITION.

Recently, the Camera Club held an exhibition of stills by an amateur cinematographer. Some of the contributors to the London Salon of Photography might have learnt at least one thing from this exhibition — that, if nothing better can be thought of, a single source of light often is a simple salvation. Such a picture as Italo Bertoglio's *The Song of the Geese* has a certain vitality from one way lighting (shadows of china birds spread on white paper).

This is the 21st birthday of the London Salon. Maurice Beck exhibits greased nudes; Cecil Beaton gets mussed up with multiple exposures of Mrs. Gladys Calthrop; the discussed P. Dubreuil shows flat enlargements of scenes dominated by a foreground object; A. Bologna presents two un-

CLOSE UP

cooked eggs swimming in a plate or six ping pong balls on twisted paper; F. Drtikol has some pretty poses with silhouettes; Dorothy Fuller has such a coy male nude; and all the others have misty landscapes, character old men, oily landscapes, pool reflections.

THIS IS THE 21st BIRTHDAY OF THE LONDON SALON!

BOOK REVIEWS.

A Voyage to Purilia, by Elmer Rice. (Victor Gollancz. 7s. 6d.)

Elmer Rice is no cocoa novelist!

His book is about a trip to film land, Purilia, wrapped in rose mist and lapped in perpetual cadences of saccharine harmony.

It is a period novel, guying the silent film. An unseen Presence introduces, in a loud voice, characters and places to the explorers. ("Here Dame Fortune and the Demon Rum take their heavy toll and sin rears its ugly head.") And a great deal of Griffith-aged fun is made of the close up. ("Pansy stopped, her hand upon the latch, and turned towards us. Her face distended until it blotted out the cottage itself." "It's the most beautiful house in the world," she said, with simple feeling. "It's home."")

But so much is beautifully apposite. The way the deer, cows, sheep always manage to make their way, slowly in single file, along the very ridges of the hills so that their bodies are sharply silhouetted against the sky. The way the Purilians are thrown into confusion by a knock on the

door, yet remain unmoved by a tornadoesque descent, in a parachute, of a long lost brother into the back garden. The way that maternity and virginity are almost equally exalted. The way all love is *spiritual*, marriage meaning nothing more than an oblivion fade-out.

It says a lot for the early films that the reader is carried along by Mr. Rice's yarn, amalgam of all early films. Granted that Mr. Rice is burlesquing, but what better burlesque of a film than a film?

One feels certain that Mr. Rice would admit that the talkies have reached the sophistication of the stage. Not that that is saying much, but it is saying something to the author.

Meanwhile, the titillating *A Voyage to Purilia* is on no account to be missed.

A Book of Make-up, by Eric Ward. (Samuel French, Ltd. 3s. 6d.)

Zenith!

A make-up book with colour illustrations, every colour in the charts being make-up. This is tantamount to genius!

In all the illustrations the same classical head has been used and is shown by dotted lines.

Then, there is an index. (Bibulous Characters. Corn-flour for Hair. Etc.)

The text is arranged so that the book can be propped open on the make-up table: there is no turning of pages for in-assimilable details.

A cannonade of reasons why the book should be bought.

CLOSE UP

The same laws of light and shade apply to both film and stage make-up, but the chapters of filmic grease paint are thorough.

Sagely the student is warned to obtain the advice of the cameraman. He is told that hard lines are out of the question; that high lights are produced by shading below the required spot; that "beading" of the eye lashes is taboo; that white body make-up should be tinted; that the sheen, produced by the use of spirit gum, must be carefully powdered. It is pointed out that nature and make-up should co-operate when the face is in animation.

There are full lists of the Max Factor numbers for panchromatic stock.

In stage make-up the author begins by stating that practically all shadows are eliminated. He looks on the face, therefore, as a blank sheet of paper.

Hints that the face, not the mirror, should be illuminated in making-up; that the function of powder is to fix pigment on the skin; that bole armenia, dusted on the hair, gives a splendid ginger effect; that a graphite pencil (BBB) is excellent for sketching in wrinkles; and so on.

There is a chapter on "confidential" make-up for the street. (Cochineal is recommended instead of dry rouge.)

There are exhaustive chapters on racial types, written with a full knowledge of the present day. For example, while the author notes that Bedouin women tatoo stars on their cheeks, he does not think the modern Frenchman is refulgent with "imperial" and "fish-tail."

On page 77 he gives the true secret of Mongolian eyes.

“ The public have been educated up to expect the standard of illumination associated with the opaque or silver screen so generally used in silent work.”

High Intensity, a booklet issued by Chas. H. Champion, shows how the new High Intensity Lamp can give more light on the screens devised to allow sound waves to pass through them.

There are, it appears, three types of H.I. Lamp.

1. H.I. Lamp with rotating positive carbon arranged with the crater facing the condensers and in co-axial alignment with the optical axis.

2. H.I. Lamp with rotating positive carbon and mirror reflector.

3. H.I. Mirror Reflector with stationary positive carbon.

The book is illustrated with good photographs.

One diagram is of three carbons after burning half-an-hour in a rotating H.I. Lamp at 130 amperes. 59 arc volts.

The consumption registered in inches per hour was :—

1. British Ship Carbon : 10.

2. Continental : 13.

3. American : 15.

Another pat on the back for England.

O. B.

AN HOUR WITH THE MOVIES AND THE TALKIES.

By Gilbert Seldes. Published by J. B. Lippincott, Company, London.

This book which summarises important landmarks in the growth of the Cinema during the last decade makes interesting reading but covers little fresh ground. The author

CLOSE UP

rapidly surveys the early developments and arrives at the conclusion that "at the age of 25 the American movie had the mentality of a child of six." The reason is attributed largely to the dependence of the film on the stage. Adolf Zukor and his "Famous Players," the passion for stage players and stage plays stifled the independent development of the movie as an art form. "Like a child brought up in a dark room, it shrank from the light, like a cripple it preferred not to move. And light and movement are its life."

The Keystone Comedies, says Mr. Seldes, were an accomplishment, and we agree. They represented in terms of psychology an escape from reality. However crudely, the Keystones had within them the source of cinema, the unreal, the fantastic. Would it be wrong to say that Mickey Mouse is the direct successor of those early slapsticks which did so much to cure the cripple?

Mr. Seldes makes an interesting comment on the Keystones. "The population of the Keystone world consists of scamps, scoundrels, shysters, fakers—outcasts of our social order—with policemen and pretty girls as foils to their activity; a little later the poor and oppressed; waiters and barbers and shopgirls; but the successful, well-groomed, alert and smart American never enters."

And after the Keystones—Charlie Chaplin.

A section on the rise of movie criticism. The attitude of contempt for the Cinema and all its work; the condemnation of all American films and the worship of the European; a defence of the theorists. "In almost all practical matters the theorist has been right about the movies, and the practical men, with a few exceptions have been constantly wrong."

Several pages, intelligent pages, on the Soviet Cinema. "The propaganda (in the Russian film) does not spoil the picture because it is inherent in the picture."

Mr. Seldes, we think, involves himself in a contradiction in discussing Russian montage. On the one hand he expresses great admiration for the methods of the Russians, for the manner in which they organise their material to achieve visual impacts on the audience; on the other hand he classifies as a mistake the consideration of the single picture, or a few feet of pictures as the building unit. But if this conception leads to the construction of the films which Mr. Seldes so frankly admires, wherein lies the mistake?

On the "talkies," in a rather inadequate section, Mr. Seldes asks if the movie has come to its natural end with the talking picture and answers that the talkies will be their end, in the sense of goal, if their makers have the intelligence to recognise the instruments, capacities and limitations of the new medium.

A useful addition for the film library.

R. BOND.

HOLLYWOOD NOTES.

Ever and anon some prophet of evil arises to assure a careless public that Hollywood's foreign market is threatened with extinction. Film import duties, quota laws, ruinous censorship, scorn of American speech and manners, habitual critical dispraise of Hollywood, competitive European production—in short, every sign points to the approaching doom of American films abroad. On the other hand, however, are

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the dispassionate figures of commerce. According to these, the export of American films continues steadily to increase. Despite the general business depression of the current year, an official report of the United States Department of Commerce recently made public discloses that twenty per cent. more film was exported during the first six months of 1930 than during the corresponding period of 1929. The actual total, breaking all records, amounted in round numbers to one hundred and forty-five million linear feet—or, to express it more dramatically, 27,462 miles. A choice of conclusions, therefore, regarding Hollywood's fate must rest either upon an acceptance of figures or a belief in signs.

* * *

One of the most serious of the many objections first offered against the talking film has now been successfully met. This particular objection was based on the plaint of the hard of hearing that they were deprived of their former enjoyment of motion pictures. Now, however, the cinemas are installing individual adjustable ear-phones for the use of deaf patrons, by means of which every sound from the screen is sufficiently amplified to enable such patrons to hear it distinctly. Already a score or more of the leading picture theatres of Los Angeles have been thus equipped, and within the next few months their example will have been followed everywhere throughout the United States. Once again, therefore, Hollywood must be thanked for that ever-active and dauntless spirit of commercialism which has inspired every development of the American cinema.

* * *

The Big Trail, Fox's historical picture of Western pioneer

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days, directed by Raoul Walsh, appears destined to take first rank among the major productions released this fall. Upwards of ten thousand persons, including hundreds of American Indians, were employed in the making of the film. For the purpose of securing authentic backgrounds, the company during its four months on location travelled through sixteen Western states and covered a distance of some twelve thousand miles. The entire picture was recorded on both Grandeur and standard-size film, and its total cost approximated two million dollars.

* * *

Evidently convinced of the popular welcome that will be accorded the Fox picture, RKO are preparing to film one of like character and at the same time to overtop it in bigness and expense. This will depict the settling of Oklahoma, as told in Edna Ferber's latest novel, *Cimarron*. Its chief spectacular feature will be the historic "land rush" which marked the throwing open by the United States Government of the Territory of Oklahoma to American homesteaders, and in which tens of thousands of prospective settlers, at a given signal, simultaneously rushed across the borders on foot, on horseback, in wagons and on bicycles, to stake their claims to homesites. Forty-two thousand men, women and children, to say nothing of thousands of dogs, horses and cattle, will be used in the making of the picture, according to a studio announcement.

* * *

The New Moon, a popular stage play, has been filmed by M-G-M, with Lawrence Tibbett and Grace Moore in the stellar rôles. The story has a Russian military setting, and

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as an aid to its realism the soldiers employed in the picture were recruited from Russian ex-service men and drilled under the command of General Theodore Lodi, a former officer of the Czar's Imperial Guard. The sincerity of the film is further assured by reason of General Lodi's personal supervision of the various characteristic details of the drama's mise en scène.

* * *

Carl Laemmle, in a recent radio talk, confided to his hearers that upon the announcement of Universal's intention to film *All Quiet on the Western Front*, many critics and self-elected cinema authorities urged him against it, on the ground that the contemplated picture lacked the essential elements of popularity and was accordingly foredoomed to failure. On the contrary, some ten thousand of the common people, from all parts of the country, voluntarily wrote to him approving of his intention. And it was this approval, as representative of public opinion, that determined the making of the film. It has long been Laemmle's policy to invite the confidence of picture fans and to be governed by the suggestions that come to him directly from this source in the form of personal letters. His studio mail contains at least five thousand of these letters every week. Primarily his business is to serve Main Street; and it is Main Street's opinions that he shrewdly accepts as a guide, rather than those of the metropolitan critics. Perhaps this may account for the fact that he is only one of the pioneer producers who is still independently in business.

C. H.

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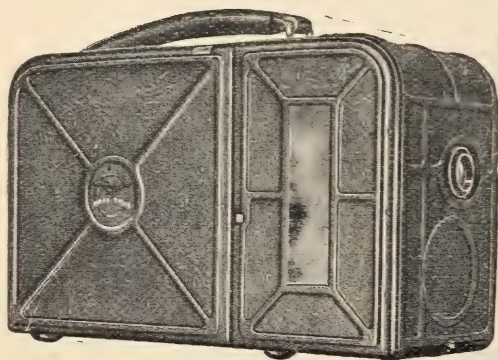
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AS IS

BY THE EDITOR.

Talking about one's own work is a bore—especially when that work lies behind, completed, and therefore, to oneself, no longer living. This funny business about *Borderline*. The reviews have been coming in, and there seem to be deductions worth making in respect of film criticism in general. But first it will be necessary to go back, and that is a pity. Please do not think I wish to impose myself or my personal ideas on you or on anybody. It is simply that the two sides which we know every question has, are here remarkably manifest, with rather surprising results.

Borderline began to be composed about eighteen months ago. It was finished in June of this year. Eighteen months ago Europe was unaware, and so was I, of Eisenstein's now commonly accepted, though little understood, theory of over-tonal montage. Eighteen months ago I decided to make *Borderline* with a "subjective use of inference." By this I meant that instead of the method of externalised observation,

dealing with objects, I was going to take my film into the minds of the people in it, making it not so much a film of "mental processes" as to insist on a mental condition. To take the action, the observation, the deduction, the reference, into the labyrinth of the human mind, with its queer impulses and tricks, its unreliability, its stresses and obsessions, its half-formed deductions, its glibness, its occasional amnesia, its fantasy, suppressions and desires.

Could this be done. Eighteen months ago I said firmly; Yes, it can. And to-day, having made *Borderline*, I repeat, yes, it can. It had not been done, it had not been touched, except in Pabst's frankly psycho-analytical film, *Secrets of the Soul*, which met with, if anything, greater derision among experienced critics. And there, again, it had been treated objectively, from outside, from the clinical point of view. There was something of it in *Uberfall* (*Accident*), which has also been known as *Assault and Battery*. Suggestion dominated this film. Suggestion dominated *Borderline*. *Borderline's* suggestion, however, was of conflict, of mental wars, of hate and enmity. *Borderline* was to be jagged. *Uberfall*, a much shorter film, was simplified. It dealt with one emotion only—that of fear.

Eighteen months ago everybody was saying the silent film had reached perfection. It had no further to go. When in reality it had only reached the first stage in an intensive development. And oddly enough, it was not until after the talkies had swept the silent film out of existence, that *Borderline*, perhaps the only really "avant-garde" film ever made, came about. I say this deliberately, and without false pride—indeed, without any pride. I have said that *Borderline*

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has many faults. How idiotic to pretend that it has not. Traversing new ground, it had all the rawness of a pioneer. But pioneer it was. And as I have said to my critics, in ten years time, the "obscurity" of which they complain will be plain as punch. And I think it will take ten years for them to recognise it.

But the faults of *Borderline* are not the faults that have been complained of. As a matter of fact some of what I call its faults have been condoned or praised. And what I know to be good has been almost unanimously ignored or condemned. But that was as I expected. I know what my purpose was and I know exactly where I have achieved it. You must give me credit for that amount of integrity after these intensive years of study and analysis. You may argue that even if I have achieved my purpose, is it worth while when the result is only partly comprehensible? For that I have no answer vehement enough. Yes, yes, yes. Comprehensibility. What is it? A demand for concessions. Simplicity, what is that? A demand for concessions.* Simplicity is for children. Simplicity is for tired people. And everything in life is done for them. Everything is made more ordinary, more shallow, more trivial for these souls who demand facile understanding. *Everything in life is done for them!* And the result is we stand quite still and our minds lie fallow and soggy with traditions—more concessions—and wonderful innovations come about and we have neither the will nor wit to use them. I say that the essence of film art is not and can never be so simple as "simplicity."

* See Bryher on the Simple Film in this issue.

These rudimentary "power-illusions" are for the weakest of the weak. Simplicity is easy to cope with, and sometimes and often it has a rightful place. But the film, to me, and to anybody who bothers to think twice, is *life*, and breathes with the breath of life, and life is not simple, and life cannot be kept within any shallow limits of form or formulae.

Borderline, then, whether you like it or not, is life. To a mind unaware of *nuance*, to a one-track mind, it would naturally appear chaotic. I do not deny for a moment that it is chaotic. It was intended to be. But over this chaos rings and reverberates one pure, loud, sullen note. I had no specific name for it, but now we know it is overtone. Some of the strips contain pictures so simple, so almost uninteresting, that alone they would seem to have no justification. But, nevertheless, they have. Some, again, are pictorially luscious. These images have never "just happened." It was not for nothing that I made a thousand or more drawings. I worked in terms of *tension*. My drawings, and my images were composed to have no static value. As I have said in an article in *The Architectural Review* for November, the film unit, or, in this case, film strip, or scene, cannot be thought of as a static quantity. Its essential character is *transfereñtial*, and it is this transferential character which alone has informed the structure. Static forms have been used, certainly. And very often. But solely to drive forward the mental impetus.

And, what is interesting to me, *Borderline*, with its "meaningless obscurity," its "vague symbolism," etc. etc., has met with none of these objections among the Germans. Their minds, it is true, work differently. They are attuned

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to the mental, especially in its more sombre aspects. But among quite undistinguished Germans there has been an appreciation that has been lacking in the most enlightened English. I think some of my friends in England are honestly abashed by it. Kindly enough, I think they feel I have let myself down and even displayed some ignorance or foolishness. So many of them have evaded me since it was shown, or made some fleeting allusion. And this has interested me keenly. I do believe that England has definitely not the approach to things of the mind that one or two other peoples have, notably the Germanic countries and the Jews. The metal sciences, psycho-analysis, for example, seem not quite happy in their growth, somehow climatically softened and changed. The Englishman rejects too much of his emotional being, and is embarrassed if he has to be brought face to face with it. His fear of " morbidity " and the neurotic is a race neurosis which sets him at a disadvantage when it comes to emotional, or mental-emotional experience. This attitude is clearly evident among my critics. They reject *Borderline*, not because it is complex—for its power is its complexity, its " unexplainedness "—like something seen through a window or a keyhole ; but because it is a film of sub-conscious reasoning. And if, among the English, the sub-conscious is ruefully admitted, for some definitely social reason it " is not to be condoned " !

Drama, of which only part filters through. That, to my mind, alone constitutes drama. There is much more to it than is ever seen—as there would be in life. Film, stage and literature have made bed-rock of the false principle of *complete enaction*. There is no complete enaction in life. There

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are hundreds of layers, inferences and associations, enmeshing everything into everything. Germany understood this. The lovely words of Pabst have invalidated all destructive carping. "You must be proud of your work!"—and to my abashed "I had not thought of it like that," "You *must* be proud!"

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

WARNING.

On account of the Congress of the Independent Cinema, the December issue of *Close Up* will not be published until December 8th.

The Second International Congress of the Independent Cinema is to be held at Brussels from November 28th to December 1st. Germany, Spain, Sweden, Italy, and Poland are to be represented there, in addition, of course, to Belgium and perhaps we can add England, for it is expected that *Borderline* directed by Kenneth Macpherson, and a film by Mr. Blakeston, will be shown.

As it is hoped to screen a great deal of the experimental work that has been done in Europe during the past year and as the Congress does not end until December 1st, we are postponing the issue of *Close Up* until December 8th, in order that we may publish the first full account of the films shown there together with many photographs. We anticipate that this will be the most complete survey of the work of independent units yet produced.

CLOSE UP

Full particulars of the Congress may be obtained from the Secretary, Monsieur Pierre Bourgeois, 280, Avenue Leopold II, Brussels, Belgium.

Intending visitors have the choice of a short sea trip via Calais and on by train to Brussels or they may go the longer sea passage via Ostende.

The cost of subscription to the Congress varies from 75 to 150 Belgian francs. Films will be shown at the Palais des Beaux Arts.

The December number of *Close Up* will be a record of the Congress with additional illustrations and should be of permanent value to film libraries.

All enquiries as to subscriptions and other data, should be addressed to Monsieur P. Bourgeois, address as above.

DANGER IN THE CINEMA

It is surprising how afraid people are of thought. They can endure discomfort, earthquakes, hurricanes and even war with equanimity provided they never have to think.

It must be some terror from infancy—some fear possibly of omnipotence, that is the root of this dislike. It is helped too, by the educational system that demands obedience and memory, rather than question and search. But the ultimate results are tragic.

Recently a firm advertised for an office boy. Four hundred and ten replies were received in answer to a single advertisement. Roughly graded, the replies fell into three groups. About two thirds of the entire number were boys aged between sixteen and nineteen, who had passed their matriculation examination and had sometimes received additional education. They had never before sought employment and asked from 15s. to 25s. a week in wages. Another group, usually unskilled, were already in employment but wished to change. The smallest group of all (and it was one of these who got the job) offered some definite office qualification, and was out of work through trade depression.

Why were these four hundred or more boys, with no definite city training, allowed to flounder on to an already over-crowded market? Thought on the part of parent and schoolmaster, could have prevented this wastage and discouragement.

In most instances their parents had paid for their education over a period of from eight to eleven years. Otherwise it had been paid for by the State. The cost can scarcely have been less, at the lowest estimate, than two hundred pounds and it was probably much more. None of the applicants interviewed from this group had any knowledge of typewriting or elementary business routine nor were these mentioned in the letters. On the other hand many stated that they had gained honours in English history, one had been a drummer in his school band, and there were numerous certificates that the applicants had done well in scouting. Unfortunately it is not customary to beat a drum to announce callers, discourse with a salesman on the feudal system, or slide down the office

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roof. It might add colour to business life but would assuredly close the business or invite investigation from the police.

But matriculation papers are not easy. Most schools begin to prepare their pupils at eleven and they take the examination at fifteen. At least 280 of actual instruction would be given on any one subject, with homework and probably cramming in addition. Yet anyone should be able to type-write at a moderate speed in 30 hours.

Education to be of value should have two purposes in view. It should endeavour to fit the child to the job most suitable for him, and it should help him to find some interest for his leisure. These boys had not been helped in either.

There was recently a correspondence in *The Times*, blaming the modern child for desiring expensive amusements. What else is he to desire? For I have known of dozens of cases of children who were forced to discard interest such as reading, photography, zoology, etc., when they went to school in favour of compulsory games. There was never time or if the interests were not actually forbidden, few survived the attitude of cold indifference on the part of the school authorities. Yet when the boy goes to his first job, when work is routine and probably dull, the school, instead of having helped him to find some absorbing interest for his leisure that would take him out of the narrow world that surrounds him, has hindered instead by giving him merely the desire for amusements he has not the money to purchase. No wonder most young Englishmen are discouraged and apathetic.

And how many schools think enough to try to prevent their pupils struggling out into an over-crowded market?

The tragedy is that they will cling to an old fashioned idea that the scholar and the trader have nothing in common. It is better for the boy to spend 280 hours learning the intricacies of feudal management than to study typewriting or the phrasing of an ordinary business letter. History is "culture"; common sense apparently isn't. (Lest it be thought I have a personal dislike of history I might remark my earliest and one of my deepest desires was to be a historian.) Why were these boys not trained instead for a definite trade?

It is the duty of the School to break down the absurd prejudice that prefers a pound a week in the city to several pounds a week in overalls, at a factory.

And parents and Press go on grumbling at the children. A few hours constructive thought on the part of their elders might save good material from wasted lives.

But what has education and an office job got to do with cinema? *Close Up* is after all devoted to films and not to social problems. Only that there seems to have developed a dangerous tradition in England that the cinema "must be simple." And if this statement be investigated it will be found to mean, "*the cinema must not think.*"

Cinema began and cinema ended in the minds apparently of rather too many people with Charlie Chaplin, and the early melodramas. A slightly wider group accept, with hesitation, Mickey Mouse. This kind of "simplicity" alone is to be regarded as cinematic. That is, they desire to confine the nursemaid's tale, and this is to be the standard, as in a child's mind the first telling of some story is the one that must be ad-

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hered to afterwards. There is abundant reason for such a layer to be popular, but no justification for it to be preferred to growth. The adult with the mentality of the eight-year-old is pitied but not admired.

Films however that have made the greatest contribution to cinematography, have been films founded upon thought. It is to be suspected that some mistake unity of purpose for simplicity, when they speak of the Soviet film being simple. Eisenstein has probably one of the most complex minds in the world to-day and many sequences of his films (though they apparently deal with simple things) require the spectator to think and not merely to see, if he would understand. Pabst always demands intellect, and the finest comedy filmed to date, *Les Nouveaux Messieurs*, presupposes in the spectator a rather rare ability to think through appearance. Probably it achieved its great success in Germany because the German is taught to think if he is not always allowed to investigate.

It is probable that the Chaplin films have the effect of hypnosis on some spectators because they were the first pictures that moved that these spectators saw, as children. This should be no barrier to their enjoyment, but it is a definite reason against making them the standard for film art. English material is some of the finest in the world and the country is practically untouched from the cinema point of view. But there is great danger that unless this tradition of the primitive film be fought, the movement forward that seemed to have begun, will be again arrested. We cannot go on being children. Either we grow up or we regress to idiots. Antics are good in their place and there are many moments when

a convenient custard pie could soothe the feelings. In the meantime four hundred and ten boys are struggling for a single pound a week job and there are not enough trained people to cope with the increasing number of abnormal children. What is needed in the English cinema is psychological investigation and the stating of facts people would prefer not to know, existed. Unless the intellect can dominate cinema, let us put films away with meccanos and picture blocks.

BRYHER.

THREE FUNNY STORIES

The most striking thing about one of our larger studios in England, the thing that strikes the visitor's eye most forcibly, is a big notice outside saying "GO SLOW." This is understood to be the motto of that particular studio.

The second story is of our largest film company, which is affectionately known as B.I.P. This name is supposed to be derived from the Latin epitaph, the change of initial from R. to B. being justified, as "British" and anything to do with rest, slumber and Rip-van-winkle-ism are held to be synonymous. But of late, and hereby hangs a tale, the British industry has shown signs of stirring in its sleep. It has produced a number of presentable pictures; not neces-



At work on *Borderline*, the mixed reception of which at a showing in London recently, Mr. Macpherson discusses in this issue.





Working on the café sequence of *Borderline*.



Two scenes from *Borderline*.





From *A City Symphony*, a one-reel study of the multiple rhythms in the life of a modern metropolis, made by Herman G. Weinberg at a total cost of eighty dollars. These two pictures are from a sequence dealing with the refueling of a ship, and are commendable for their graceful simplicity of line and suggestion.





From *A City Symphony*. A skyscraper sequence. These four photos are exclusive to *Close Up*.





These two wonderful action studies were taken by Mr. A. M. M. Payne in Berlin, of the American dancer, Mr. Ted Shawn. They show the remarkable sense of significant timing which is invaluable to the cinèmatist—the capturing of the essential in movement. To have achieved this with a still camera is an even more remarkable achievement.



These studies were taken with a Leitz "Leica" Camera, using Perutz Special Leica Cinema Film, from which these were enlarged.
The exposure given was one two-hundredth of a second.



From the Ufa-Tonfilm *Rosenmontag*, directed by Hans Steinhilber, with Lien Deyers, whose work in *The Spy* will be remembered by British Audiences. With Lien Deyers, above, Lucie Höflich.



Photos: Ufa.

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sarily good cinema and all that, but good average entertainment. It has devised a system whereby in return for films so dull as to intolerable to all but the middle-classes, it offers farces so commonplace that they appeal solely to the nit-wits; thus only the intelligent are left uncatered for, and one third of the public is really a very small portion, old boy. We make, first *Two Worlds*, then *Almost a Honeymoon*, *Escape* and *A Warm Corner*. Six British films are in consequence shown simultaneously in London cinemas. Let me say that not all of them are as grim as these mentioned, classic *Murder* for instance. But one is far worse than any mentioned and this is my point. For a long time there has been running at the Carlton, where Chevalier's film is the big piece, a British film, and everybody is very glad it should run for so long, and be in a theatre controlled by Paramount, etc. It is a farce and the star is someone called Leslie Fuller and he belonged, I am told, to a concert party known as the Margate Pedlers. So of course everyone who follows the Margate Pedlers will follow his film, and that is just grand.

He is a batman on service in India. A comic batman, you understand, and oh, an excessively comic India. There is a lieutenant in love with the general's daughter (general, lieutenant and daughter all equally comic). The lieutenant gets in wrong by giving the general a curio which has "Birmingham" stamped on the bottom. He does not know what to do, but hearing from an Indian beauty that there is a temple with an image with wonderful pearls, no others like them, he decides to rob the temple, placate the general and win the daughter. All this is made possible because he is on familiar terms with the Indian beauty. She does wiggling

dances in the shrubbery and he says "Not to-night, dear," and she sort of says "You English are so cold." The batman, to whom she has wiggled a little earlier, is not so cold, but he has gone off with a Cockney, also comic, servant-girl. Yes, it is the British army in India . . . the same army Pudovkin was so rude about in *Storm Over Asia*.

The batman and his girl arrive at the temple, and watch a (comic) ceremony. They look at the image, which they call a "gawd" and find extremely comic. They accidentally push it over, and the batman then takes its place and delivers comic remarks to the worshippers, who are very awed. The lieutenant arrives to rifle the image, and is caught by the priests, etc. But the image-batman comes to life, abuses them and fills them with horror, so that they let go the lieutenant. The general arrives on the scene and is (can you beat it?) so impressed by the subaltern's "daring" at risking his life at the hands of infidels, all for his fair daughter's hand, that he gives him that hand.

During the course of his masquerade as an image, Leslie Fuller calls the Indian priest "undressed tripe." He calls him lots of other things, which I was so alarmed to hear that I could not believe them. They were so incredible that I will not risk putting them down. But they followed the lines of the tripe-repartee.

After this film there followed a news reel with pictures of the Bombay riots.

Now, taking things in the order in which they occur, is it very tactful, is it good business, to show such a film at such a time, in such a place? Is it frightfully pleasant to show it where there are lots of Indians, when there are riots

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in India? That, of course, is the least important thing; the riots are our fault, and due to the outlook that produces such a film.

But what really worried me, being not in the least religious in the creed sense, was the very bad fun made of another race's religion. It isn't very amusing to see a Margate Pedler doing slapstick in a temple, and I don't care whether that temple is the Taj Mahal, or St. Paul's. It isn't my idea of fun to knock an image over, take its place and, opening a door in its stomach, make funny faces through it. It isn't funny in this case, not only because it mightn't be very funny anyhow, but because we could not do it with our own creeds. No one would allow a charwoman out on a spree to take the place of Mary, Mother of God, in an Italian church; no one would think of using a crucifix as a property in slapstick. No one would even agree that a temple (of any other creed) was a suitable setting for love scenes, comic or otherwise. But because this is India, all this is excessively funny and gay. British films are looking up, and the censor smiles on it and bans *Martin Luther*, because it might offend Roman Catholics.*

We hear a lot of the loss of white prestige among "natives" through films showing white men as monsters and white women as Messalinas (these are understood to be American pictures); we know that that is why black and brown and yellow races are getting so "bumptious." We say it is misrepresentation. But what can this film be? If it is misrepresentation, it is evil, degrading and all the things

* And everyone found Pudovkin's lamasery scenes "offensive mockery of religious beliefs of an ancient civilization."—*Ed.*

we say of the other pictures ; if it is true, why ban *Storm over Asia* for libelling the British uniform ? At least the officers in that film are doing their duty. In *Kiss Me Sergeant* the white men are in India, battenning on the " natives," bullying them, and regarding the temples as places for " officers and gentlemen " to rob. By all means let us show up religion as a funny thing. It would hurt a lot of people's susceptibilities, but it would clear up a lot, do a lot of good. Let us shriek with laughter at Lourdes, set up Oberammagau as an aunt sally, grow hysterical at the Lambeth Conference, and by means of laughter kill the superstitions of Passover and Pentecost, " Our Lady borne smiling and smart, in a pink gauze gown all spangles, with seven swords stuck in her heart." Let us do all this, it would clear the air. But I cannot believe that the makers of *Kiss Me Sergeant* were actuated by any such purifying principle. I think to them the religion of Indians is very funny ; a good joke and fair game. They probably think that the Indians themselves must see the fun of it. After all, we are the favoured race ; we're white, and what we do is white. Indians and such must recognise that. Nobody dare laugh at us . . . for if they dare their films get banned. Look at that Russian fellow. . . Yes, undoubtedly the makers of Leslie Fuller's film think " idols " very amusing, and it never occurs to them that our own religions have more than a touch of absurdity about them . . . such for example as a series of laws made for a nomadic people applied to settled nations ; exhortations to a race whose one hope lay in multiplying being accepted by countries suffering from gross overpopulation ; a whole system of religious belief formed in the East

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being taken over by a Western civilization . . . there is nothing funny about that. There isn't. It is all very unfortunate. But there is, it seems, a great deal that is funny about Indian temples. . .

And they call it *Kiss Me Sergeant*, and what I cannot understand is not even the film being shown, but being MADE.

And as to *Storm over Asia*, and the behaviour of the wearers of the alleged British uniform, it will be interesting to compare *Hell's Angels*, in which (unless the scenes are cut out) the behaviour of the English officers is very surprising (or perhaps not). But that will be passed, and Mr. Hughes is a millionaire.

Whilst on the subject of censorship (it is so boring, that one doesn't want to bring it up again) let me describe a plot of a new American film. A woman having got into difficulties with three suitors, goes to the house of a fourth man; he is permanently half-drunk, and makes her completely so. She collapses, and he carries her to his bed, locks the door and sits outside all night. She wakes up, and, rather gratuitously, decides that something must have happened. So she says he will obviously have to marry her. To make everything quite clear, it is only on their way to be married that he explains that he was outside all night, whereupon she exclaims that, then, there is no need for him to marry her, is there? . . . well, that's all right. But why is that passed and so much else isn't? Perhaps because it is Gloria Swanson in *What A Widow*, and the censor thinks he is giving us sex-maniacs a sop.

ROBERT HERRING.

ENOUGH—NO MORE!

The reader may rest assured that all facts in this article can be backed by irreproachable evidence. He may experience his moments of apprehension, but may he never do us the injustice of wondering whether the cited truth be doctored.

Norwood is not, particularly, an eccentric and superstitious town; its new super cinema need not, therefore, be regarded by the conscientious student as an extravagant example of cinema architecture. So, let us glance at the Norwood Regal. The vestibule attempts to "create a friendly and intimate effect with Spanish and Italian influences, taken from the palaces of Spain": in fact the vestibule is somebody's idea of a coloured Spanish courtyard. Opposite the entrance is a semi-circular bay beautified with twisted columns, arches and modelled pedestals. The coffered ceiling is lit by Italian bowls. There are wrought iron grilles, topped with lanterns, and a multitude of floor standards of a Spanish nature. Inside, the auditorium is covered with a pergola "ornate with trailing vines". Side walls are surmounted by creeper, while tree-tops suggest a hidden garden. Two grills, hiding the organ pipes, are "ornate with greenery." A sun, above the proscenium, shoots out decorative rays.

Inhabitants of Staines, it may well be imagined, would be

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pained if one were to insinuate that they are peculiar. Let us inspect their Majestic Cinema. "The atmospheric theme is Venetian"; which means that the auditorium is conceived as a canal. Clouds and stars are spattered over the blue ceiling, and the walls are fitted with rings for mooring gondolas. The proscenium arch is a colonnaded arcade, thrown up in relief by blue lighting. Two Venetian turrets *disguise* the projection box (a shamefully mechanised thing).

Predominating colours, inside the auditorium of the new Astoria in the South of London, are light silver, light gold, red, green and fawn, the whole conjuring up "the barbaric splendour of Egypt." Every seat is of red wood with green satin brocade. The ceiling consists of a decorated treillage, with vermillion as prevalent hue. Gold has been chosen for the proscenium and the side walls support plaster panels used as reflecting surfaces for "modern lighting." Side walls to the circle are occupied by Egyptian scenes; helmets and spears of soldiers, in these classical tableaux, are reproduced in gold and silver leaf. A huge piece of Egyptian tapestry does duty as a safety curtain. The Lytham Palace is another example of a recent Egyptian "atmospheric"; the main structure being cream-coloured facience with a buff frieze, plum-coloured parapet and a panelled frieze in cream on a blue ground depicting sculptured figures with a Wedgewood effect. A dominant window is set in a metal grille and balanced by side windows treated in cellulose gold. Painted sphinxes, on stepped dados, are sheltered in the auditorium. The panels, representing desert scenes, are executed in colours "barbarous and regal." Electric light fittings are constructed of tubes and beads of glass depending from concealed

three-colour lights, which cause the glass tubes to gleam from top to bottom. Mention must be made of the pay-box of pink mirror glass, giving a "flattering sunburnt return to each observer."

The Victoria Metropole is another new, *show-case* super. We wonder if the poet ever dreamt of such a marble entrance hall, with its surround of red onyx and the black and gold of the pillar bases. Spanish Renaissance style gave the architect scope to play with "artistic plaster surfaces." Seats are in rose and gold and the orchestra rail is of carved wood. Yet another Spanish super is the Granada at Dover, replete with Moorish arches.

But we are becoming positively embarrassed by the superabundance of current examples. Shall we talk of the paper stucco oak beams in the cinema at Tottenham; or of the mosaic floor, at the Capitol, Epsom, which has been achieved by piecing together odds and ends of material; or of the "elegant sylvan scenes" which are murals at the Astoria in the Old Kent Road? Shall we turn to America, where atmospheric cinemas have been popular for years, to discuss the stacks of armour and statuary in marble, stone and gold at the Warner Brothers' Beacon; or the "formal lawn of Louis XIV in gay regalia for a moonlight festival" which is the Chicago Paradise Theatre; or Loew's Paradise Theatre, New York, designed in Italian Baroque ("a design with which certain liberties were taken, suggestions of the strong influence of the Austrian Baroque, and many of the architectural features and details are idealised replicas of the architecture of the Vatican and St. Peter's Cathedral Rome"). Or, are we ready to draw our conclusions?

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Surely, from the very showman's point of view, these houses are an entertainment in themselves? And that is limitation, for one should not repeat the same entertainment indefinitely.

Aesthetically, what can we say about resplendent ornaments stuck on as a final dressing? What about the cinema built as a cinema and not as an imitation meadow? What about ornament as "the most tasteful expression of necessary forms"? What about the utilitarian principles of the clean, magnificent architecture of Germany? (Better seats and ventilation rather than additional flutings.)

* * *

"On her head was a barrel-shaped hat surmounted by a point, of gravel-coloured velvet, and of considerable dimensions. Inside it, seven mechanical birds warbled in twenty-one different notes every three-quarters of a minute. They were observable through glass panes let into the side of the hat and moved by means of invisible clockwork springs."

Papillèe, Marcus Cheke's silhouette of life under the Directoire.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

FILM NOVITIATES, ETC.

In my Notes in the August *Close Up*, in my comment on the makers of *The Silent Enemy*, the reader will find the description, "novices with talent," which should read "novices without talent." I am glad the error occurred: it gives me a lead into some observations upon film novices.

Film criticism suffers from the presence of the perennial novice. He appears with a frenetic outcry of discovery and reiterates ephemeral platitudes. The novice is not always a minor, he may sometimes be mature of age, if not of judgment. Such one is Mr. Barnet G. Braver-Mann (né Braverman) of Detroit, Michigan. In the clarion of Hollywood, *Film Spectator*, Mr. Braver-Mann (then Braverman) recorded the tenets of the film structure. The omniscient *Literary Digest*, which presents both sides of unimportant questions, called Braverman "a challenging esthetician." That non-committal, sphinxlike referee recognised in the dicta of the Detroit Aristotle "first principles of cinematic art." It should have read "principles of the first cinematic art." Ford's townsman (the townsman, i.e., of the Ford-car), overcome by this acclaim from Funk and Wagnalls, the seat of American orthography, immediately restated his platitudes—a prerogative of youth—and put a hyphen into his name—

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signature of aristocracy—and published his restated platitudes in *Experimental Cinema*, Philadelphia—coast to coast. His tenets are emphatic as well as redundantly fallacious. Here they are in their spurious virginity :

“ The medium of cinematic art is motion.

“Motion as an art medium is self-sufficient and has no affinity to such media as words (away with explanatory sub-titles), music (sound), speech (spoken titles), or painting (colour and static design).

“ Motion applied to a succession of images can transmit thought, stimulate emotions, indicate time, place, character, sound, speech, atmosphere, physical sensation, and state of mind.

“Motion, when utilized as an art medium by artists, has proven the motion-picture a major art form, logically independent, inevitably self-sufficient, and utterly free of intrusion by the mechanics of any other medium.”

More than a dozen years ago, Dr. Hugo Münsterberg of Harvard University, at the behest of the film-industry and by its subsidy, examined the movie to lend it scholastic sobriety and absolution as an art. He investigated it academically for its contemporaneous character, rather than for its nature as a medium in evolution. He approached the film in the capacity of a clinical psychologist drawing esthetic conclusions from his analyses. His book, *The Photoplay*, is of importance in the history of film-criticism. It gave the film the rights of an independent art and indicated its power over that of the theatre to objectify “ in our world of perception our mental act of attention.” Starting as a psychologist, he reasoned as psychologist, from recorded characteristics :

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"Depth and movement alike come to us in the moving picture world, not as hard facts, but as a mixture of fact and symbol. They are present and yet they are not in the things. We invest the impressions with them.

"The close-up has objectified in our world of perception our mental act of attention and by it has furnished art with a means which far transcends the power of any theatric stage."

The psychologist is speaking here, and from his observations he comes to his statement of the art of the movie :

"Moving pictures are not and ought never to be imitation of the theatre. They can never give the esthetic values of the theatre; but no more can the theatre give the esthetic values of the photoplay. The drama and the photoplay are two coordinated arts, each perfectly valuable in itself.

"The next step toward the emancipation of the photoplay decidedly must be the creation of plays which speak the language of pictures only.

"As soon as we have clearly understood that the photoplay is an art in itself, the conservation of the spoken word is as disturbing as colour would be on the clothing of a marble statue.

"The colours are almost as detrimental as the voices."

Fourteen years later novices repeat these criteria for the *initial* integrity of the movie. Indeed, the constant repetitions of this first-form attitude are wasteful and even effrontery, viewed in the light of the film's subsequent evolution. And yet they recur and recur with the dogmatic assertiveness of an original discovery. Or, Mr. Welford Beaton, editor and publisher of *Film Spectator*, the novice's godfather, stirred by the fundamentalness of the godson, re-discovers Münsterberg.

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Instead of seeing Münsterberg as the academic observer, Beaton—in true novitiate technique—accredits the scholar with having been a certain saviour of the cinema, had the moguls been attuned. This is nonsense: the moguls paid Münsterberg to vindicate the movie, and the latter did so.

Writing in *The New Republic*, July 23, on *In Darkest Hollywood*, Mr. Beaton says:

“No matter how far or in what direction screen art advances, Münsterberg’s masterly analysis of its fundamentals will remain always the solid-rock foundation for all its literature. Only those who have read and mastered this work are entitled to boast that they have put their feet on the first rung of the ladder that leads to an understanding of the principles of the screen art.” What Mr. Beaton has to say next is relevant to the preparations for an historical comprehension of the film, and especially of film-criticism:

“In Hollywood there are twenty thousand people engaged in making for world-wide distribution examples of this art. Neither in the main Hollywood library nor in any of its branches can a copy of the book be found. It is not for sale in a Hollywood bookstore. I have not encountered a dozen people who have read it, or two dozen who ever heard of it. The film industry is one of tremendous proportions, yet this great contribution to its mentality is out of print. Hollywood talks in terms of the externals of motion pictures, but does not think in terms of their fundamentals.”

Mr. Beaton might have told us just what Münsterberg has meant to the dozen people who have read him, including his own novices. The book is in the New York library but it has not prevented *Spectator’s* young frenzied contributor, Sey-

mour Stern, from blowing Münsterberg's "fundamental" precepts (concepts?) up to cosmic entities. This much can be said for Münsterberg: he was not an unqualified absolutist. He recognised a possible argument for colours, tolerated certain captions, and accepted harmonious musical accompaniment. The cart-before-the-horse logic informs Mr. Beaton's approach. He sees the individual as creating the environment. And believes that a devotion to Münsterberg would have saved the film—from the talkie. And harken to this absoluteness: "If Hollywood, which talks about nothing but motion pictures, had known what it was talking about, it never would have gone over so completely to the talkies. It would have known that they cannot permanently endure. It would have known that the silent screen art is fundamentally sound," (is this logomachy?) "and that if the order of their coming had been reversed, the silents, intelligently made, would have chased the talkies off the screen." This is the sort of hypothetical reasoning which is proof of the absence of the historical mind—the mind with a sense of sequence in evolution that would know of the movie's inherent development from the simple to the compound. Mr. Beaton's ignorance of esthetics coincides with his ignorance of social manoeuvres. He terminates his articles with an attack: ". . . they selected Will H. Hays, who has had much experience in politics and none in business." Exactly. The movie industry, manipulated by Wall Street, selected Hays because, as a politician, he knew the "art" of subterfuge. He acts as camouflage, barrage, and decoy. Wall Street will take care of the business.

The novice-mind obstructs the road to valid criticism:

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social and esthetic, the esthetic in the social. If you want a compendium of the novice-mind refer to the first two issues of *Experimental Cinema*, suspended for the time being. I have been the New York correspondent for it, out of personal sympathy for the editors and of a hope that something valuable might materialize from it. The journal has treked to Hollywood—the land of frustrated esthetes—with the intention of bringing a “fresh breath” into that morass. Young mystified mystics who have not been able to direct pertinent arrows toward even the periphery of Hollywood are going to influence the production there. Truncated boobs! Actually this is a rationalisation of weakness and egocentricity, of escape and a wish for success. Such aspirations emit a mal-odor which is even worse than the stench of the west coast marshes. We are developing humbugs.

Novitiate is cult. In the September *Theatre Guild Magazine*, Braver-Mann discovers Charlie Chaplin. A long time ago I began to prick the cult of Chaplin. I know that others have questioned the absolute evaluation of him as (to quote Max Reinhardt) “the beginning and end of cinema.” Bakshy in a brief note indicated Chaplin’s inadequacy as a director of his comedies. Seldes—one of the inflaters of Charlot—like the weathercock he is, re-echoed faintly (in a vague mention) Bakshy’s doubt. Silka in the *Filmliga tijdschrift* refused the sign to unqualified admiration of Chaplin. *Les Chroniques du Jour* devoted a special number to Chaplin, allowing some “Nos” from Carco et al. I am certainly not advocating muckraking—there is something of that suggested by Hugh Castle’s article. Any full study or critique of Chaplin will not simply have to plough through

the cultism of Delluc, Poulaille, Iwan Goll (Chaplinade), the effete poets and painters, Seldes, Stark Young, the *Tribune Libre* (which had a Gala Chaplin, not succeeded—for the first time in its history—by a discussion), etc.; but will estimate Chaplin socially, as I have indicated in the following:

“Chaplin brought into the comedy the English music-hall, whose manner has been his stamp since. But his development, though it has been toward the more precise reference of satire, has not been without the influence of Sennett and Linder. . . . Chaplin extended the comic type to a social center-of-reference and achieved therewith satire—the humour of society.” In this article *New World Monthly*, February, 1930) I went on to indicate the failure to extend the uses of rhetoric in the movie comedy, and assigned as one cause of the failure “the cult of Chaplin.”

“The emphasis upon Chaplin as the film’s one full realization has obscured the origins of American film-comedy. It has also not considered Chaplin’s limitations as a director and the shortcomings of the artist as performer. He has not yet achieved a Don Quixote toward which his comedy tends but does not attain. . . .” In the August 20 issue of *The New Freeman*, I attributed the frustration to several causes: the cultist stress, Chaplin’s own limitations and the suppression of the creative social energies.

A current instance of this cultism is a child’s story written by Michael Gold, *Charlie Chaplin’s Parade*, which never asks whether Charlie Chaplin is an experience of the child of today, if ever he were to the child for whom this book is meant—the pre-adolescent. In my work with children I have learned that Chaplin—subtilized and infrequent in his appearances

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—is considered “ silly ” by children in adolescence, whereas Lloyd—or even the innocuous Bobby Vernon—would be preferred. (Date, as of 1928.)

Braver-Mann goes typically into the *Commedia dell' Arte* for Chaplin's ancestry with a show of the knowledge of school books. Fred Karno is a more propinquitous forefather. B-M says “ There is nothing stereotyped in the humour of any Chaplin comedy. . . ” Which is erroneous. Chaplin utilized English stereotype; that was his first achievement: the fitting into the movie progression of the intensive frame of English vaudeville. B-M vindicates Chaplin's “ apparently unmethodical manner ” by entrusting it to “ feeling ” (the quotes are Braver-Mann's). Murnau expressed it much more concisely and accurately when he spoke of the spontaneous film of a Chaplin as a *raconte*. But even the fact of Chaplin's being a *raconteur*, while it explains, does not excuse his directorial failure. As a matter-of-fact, Braver-Mann's attempt to validate the cult betrays Chaplin. His article is mainly of Chaplin the single personality. The brief space devoted to Chaplin the creator of the film and the rather quibbling criticism of Chaplin's “ inability to think and work in terms of montage ” reflect two things: Chaplin's directorial limitation, and Braver-Mann's shirking of a major problem. Chaplin's success in *A Woman of Paris* would seem to vindicate him as a director, but we must not forget the arbitrary limitations Chaplin set himself. The sustained interrelationship of characters was between two personages only, and the “ visual continuity ” did not comprise extensive reference. Ideologically and in treatment, the cinema will need to hold Chaplin (and Monta Bell?) responsible for

an insidious influence, Chaplin's inspirational temperament could create entities in two-reels; increasingly it has made what are but tableaux in his longer films. Every good director allows for the flexibility of the idea born "on the lot."

I too do not deny Chaplin's eminence. But at this late date it is cult-sycophancy to talk about such obvious Chaplin traits as "plasticity, imagination, and mastery of pantomime." By the way, had Mr. Braver-Mann read an article of mine—published several years ago in *The Billboard*—he might have added the choreographic value of Chaplin's two-reelers. The use of adjectives like Rabelaisian (an ignorant though popular use of that adjective incidentally) and Falstaffian do not concern the Chaplin of today—why have not his longer films been more than elongations of his shorter? And all of the numerous descriptions of his type have been anticipated in "the classic hobo," just as Harry Langdon has characterized himself as "a Christian innocent." Braver-Mann has not dwelt sufficiently upon Chaplin's fear of over-acting and his penchant for good tastes: defects in a director . . . see D. W. Griffith. No Chaplin film beyond two reels can compare as a structure-in-comedy with *Hands Up!* No Chaplin film can equal in the enactment of the comic spirit such a work as Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. And Chaplin promised to give us a film of social quixoticism, where his pathos would render the humor poignant as a social indictment. He gave us *The Circus*, in which the pathos seeped out until it trailed after the conclusion of the film. America depressed him, and his own quasi-intellectuality hindered him. His book, *My Trip Abroad*, though prepared by Monta Bell, explains much of Chaplin's *impasse*. When

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he resists the sycophantic and ill-tutored Braver-Manns, the demi-esthete of the Seldes ilk, the paternal metaphysic like Waldo Frank—trapped in controversies with the soul, the populists, the demagogues of letters, the specious enthusiasts, all who would inflict their cult upon him, and listens to demands which urge him to forgo spurious virtues, he may move beyond his present status. Though I doubt that he can do so, in the present mind of the movie.

The suggestion of muckraking in Castle's comments on Chaplin is induced by the typical London playboy tone. Yet Castle has put his finger on one of the ideological flaws in Chaplin's work: "the atmosphere of intellectual despair." It is this pathetic defeatism, this cynicism (which, by the way, in even more offensive forms is discoverable in Lubitsch) that attracts middle-class intellectuals. *Hands Up!* was much more heroic comedy. Castle, I believe, when his tone—as on page 135—becomes direct, didactic even, says much more than Braver-Mann in a fraction of the space. The simultaneity of these considerations of Chaplin points to a crucial moment in Chaplin's career. Muckraking, especially in America, will corrupt the sincere criticism of the man, and equally unscrupulous defences will force a false issue. Chaplin, not ever a secure personality in the American scene, may be further confused. His enthusiasts have been unfair to him: their outcries have been forms of self-expression unmindful of the artist as a developing phenomenon. Add to these the journeyman of the Jim Tully and Konrad Bercovici type and you can have a sense of the sum of pressures upon the mind of Chaplin. Chaplin's severest critic (though this statement appear hypocritical) will be his best friend. Six

years ago Gilbert Seldes (*The Seven Lively Arts*) said of Chaplin: "He is on the top of the world, an exposed position, and we are all sniping at him. . . . It is because Charlie has had all there ever was of acclaim that he is now surrounded by deserters." Muckraking began early, but it has not accumulated. The Seldeses of criticism will have been responsible for much that will ensue. In their zeal to disprove the effete Stark Youngs they are deflected from the intensive consideration of what is most assertive in Chaplin. True it is there is Sennett in Chaplin (I have said as much), and ironic it is that one who has been called too "literary" a film critic should urge against Chaplin's becoming too literary. Actually what I urge is that the Sennett presence should materialise in scope and the Chaplin in pointedness. "Irony and pity" comprise only a banal slogan: from Anatole France to Paul Eldridge. I disagree with Seldes that Chaplin has excelled in composition, or that the illusion of the impromptu is a dominant virtue. The arabesque of rhetoric articulating a conception of social experience is the end Chaplin should have sought—and would have—in a society where the Seldeses were muted and the critical perceptions active. The populists have done Charlie dirt. They have made their sentimental and wistful pleasure in his whimsicality stand for supremacy in appreciation. Certainly Stark Young was wrong in seeing Chaplin as too much theatre—Charlie re-converted his derivation—but that the latter has not extended his tendency far enough along the path toward fulfilment, was sadly perceivable in the fatuous and dissociated pity of *The Circus*, and in the foreshortened exposure of *The Pilgrim*.

HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN.

HER PUBLIC WE!

“Faster, faster!” said the Red Queen and everybody else, and the de Milleon dollar babies kick higher than ever, and all is safely gathered in. But still they ply us with mechanical genius and “extensions of the medium.” The dialogue film has not even got to the stage of a slow-motion talkie before more is happening. (Parenthetically, the slow-motion talkie might be, within its limits, rather exciting, with (for instance) a prayer—or a political speech or historical lecture for that matter—in slow talking progress, as a background to the thoughts, vocally and visually presented, of the listener: the two interrelating, as ideas or sounds in the sermon suggested others in the private thought sequences. When attention increased, the background would increase in tone and tempo, and when most remote from the attention, recede.) The X-ray talkie, too, is hardly here yet, nor, provincially, the wide screen. But even so more is to come. Journalistically, let us hope for the best.

In a very short time we shall be televisionary: seeing and hearing. And we shall see and hear not only the actual performances of the broadcasting studio, but wallow happily in the relayed joys of the cinema studio also. The economic

vista to the exhibitor may be disturbing, but the telefilm-fan will dutifully applaud the increased luxury and mechanisation of his diversion. Or I don't know. Most audiences like cinemas and not films. There may be applause. But it will be earned, if the telecinema can give some catholicity of programme, and so permit isolation of what it is desired to hear, ensuring that the wretched audience may not be compelled to sit through whatever has been thrown in with the pound of tea, or acres of sugars, that it came to enjoy.

Box-office is the despair of the cinéaste, who sees intelligent experiment bleating everywhere to a noisy death, because of the lack of interested support. In London it was possible to run the Avenue Pavilion purely for the exhibition of "different" (sic) films, but almost anywhere else in England an attempt at such a policy meant failure, owing to a lack of a sufficient concentration of interest. Of course each cinema of any character at all, that was not merely one of a chain projecting the stream of well-publicised wash prescribed by a distant company, had and has a policy of some sort, catering for local predilection. But usually it has merely been the successive presentation of one particular brand of stupendous unattraction—Wild Western, wilder Eastern, wildest of all historical, or tame domestic—the "programme picture." Now this is all most charming and democratic. Programme pictures are very nice, and Clara Bow's money that way. But there *are* other films, although at the moment they are hardly ever seen (I write from a good hunting country) except sometimes hidden, dimly, as the vegetables to a red-meat drama. They have, in England, no definite home. Even the present move among cinemas towards individualisation

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of policy is unlikely to help substantially the showing of "experimental" themes or methods.

The telecinema might conceivably help. Not that it is shamefully suggested that a "new medium" should be pocketed by the people it would particularly interest. Only that their interests should be considered. As these were indulged, so would the numbers of the interested swell, as has happened with the drama. Ordinarily it is difficult to make commercial successes, on the English stage, of Ibsen, Strindberg, Tchekhov or even O'Neill, but their works are frequently and even popularly performed on (or is it over?) the radio, as well as broadcasting plays proper, and narcotic queans of jazz. Parallel. At last the layman may see, without weary ferreting, films at present denied by the apathy of uninformed and the careful rigour of our moral governesses. For even a censor, trained to find anti-social sermons in stones and bad in everything but leg-shows, might believe that films which it would be appallingly dangerous to exhibit communally might well be spoonfed to a public separated into its domestic units. Even if the censor, his head inky but unbowed, refused to see this, (or even to see the films) the telecinema might still cater for the students, as well as the fans, of the screen. By all means, and in most programmes, let there be orthodox pictures of low life and high motives, high life and low motives, and the Middle West with motives which it is hard to understand at all. Let us have the leg, the bottle, and the theme song, or whatever in a few months are the equivalents. Even most students of the cinema can be fans. But give us the opportunity to pick and choose, for tastes differ, even in the fleshly schools, where one man's meat is

another's Swanson, and Two Black Crows don't make a White. No sitting the show round, but culture or cuties by timetable.

The telecinema will be able to show the Latest and Best, Successes of the Past, Films for the Old Folks, and the whole gamut of refined entertainment. It is a crushing idea, but almost everyone will be happy. We shall be able to enjoy in our armchairs Browning's "film work—eyes and ears—all the distraction of sense": the soporific doses that we love, the distilled daydreams of houris and rectitude over which we are accustomed to dote and doze. And perhaps we may be allowed a few films of beauty and ideas too. If so, the new toy will have at least one offset.

Really, of course, they will merely show films for the Lower Education, every alternate Friday. The other Friday will be Amami night, and we shall all go to the pictures.

PENNETHORNE HUGHES.

KINO-OLYMPIADA

(Concluded).

Judas. SOVKINO.

Reg. : E. Ivanov-Barkov.

Operator : Giber.

BELLS. Bells of a monastery. Fine buildings, lovely gardens, flowers, fruit, vegetables, animals. All monastery property. People kiss ikons in church, money is filling boxes, many pilgrims to miraculous shrines, money pours in. Priests house well furnished. But workers on land of monastery are not similarly housed nor fed. A whitehaired priest picks flowers appreciatively. Another is studying insects—with a girl. In this apparent contentedness, appear soldiers. Whites. Officers make for monastery. They know where best stuff is! A good billet always for officers of the Czar. Demand special provisions for men, and money. So priest calls on people for further "offerings" to the lord and his appointed. Meanwhile soldiers are collecting their "offerings" by force. A peasant's cow or goat. His only possession, his very livelihood. Pigs and chickens. Any-

thing eatable they take. Peasants run to priests. But more realistic peasants run for arms, hidden ready for revolt. Ready for the revolution they have waited for so long. Among them rifles and a machine gun. Stealthily they take it to a point of vantage, but are seen by one of the monks, who informs his Superior Father, who immediately informs Chief Officer. Orders. Soldiers advance to attack. Machine gun ready! They retreat. Flower-loving priest implores peasants not to fire. They disregard him, his power is gone—or is it? For he stands in front of the gunmouth, and one of the peasants gives in, and jerks aside the gun. But by now the Whites are on top of them. Too late. Gun is captured. Priest thrown aside. Peasants scatter. Gun now turned on them, despite priests' entreaties. A little boy with aeroplane toy runs across line of fire. He is shot too. Priest runs and picks him up. In church he is laid, mother imploring the Ikon to save him, priest prays, child dies. Priest holds cross before his eyes, but boy turns to aeroplane propellor he still has in his hand. Symbol of the new is his last vision. Outside arrested peasants, inside doubting priest. He goes to Superior, for release of prisoners. Totally disregarded. Meanwhile insect-loving priest is doing his penances, but thinking of the girl. Surreptitiously she comes to see him. They hear someone coming, hide,—in comes one of Superiors with woman who cleans and cooks. Couple hide, and see these two undress and go to bed. Meanwhile prisoners are put in dungeon. Priests are counting out money in their boxes. Girl rides off to reds who are near. Priest hears of Superiors' immorality. Confronts them with it, and demands also release of prisoners. But he

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too is put in the dungeon. Peasants want to stone him, he was the cause of their defeat. But leader stops them. Chief Officer is now becoming lover also of the Superior's woman. Peasants in cell dream of "Bread—Peace—Land." Girl finds Reds. Bells. It is Sunday. Church day. Procession. Ikons. Incense. The Whites are leading out prisoners at back to be shot. Crowd in church. Ikon—Virgin cries. Miracle! Cross themselves fervently. Cross is offered to doomed men. They refuse. The doubting priest now *knows*: he dashes across to the ground and stamps on it. Special sermon to worshippers, the Bolsheviks are coming to take their land and wives and all. They must defend themselves. Arms from the church are distributed. Reds are on the way. Suddenly in the middle of the church the Girl appears. Tells that Whites are killing their own while priest talks. Her lover hears her, comes out from behind Virgin-Ikon, thus disclosing all the works complete for miracle making! Uproar. Attack priests, and surge out to the Whites. The priest now atheist, tears off his monkish garb. The lover, now Red, does the same. The Whites flee. And the peasants joyfully lead back their cattle at last to have "Bread, Peace, Land", under the Soviet!

Function.—A deliberate anti-religious film, showing the pro-Czar-anti-Soviet role the Church has always played in Russia, and in some parts does even now. Exposing also the so-called miracles which abound in the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, in some countries even today!

Form.—Another interesting example of the Griffith tradition still informing scenarios. The last minute rescue, etc.

On the whole the treatment is straightforward, but one or two interesting touches as where child refuses the cross to look at the aeroplane propellor, and both the Priests who become Reds even in the beginning are differentiated: one shown as a flower-lover and the other as a student of nature!

A film which would undoubtedly be banned in England, or in Europe, come to that.

To the growing list of Russian regisseurs with claims to greatness can now be added the name of OKLOPKOV, Scenarist and Regisseur of *The Way of the Enthusiast*, Sovkino (Moscow). The film is at the moment under revision, due to certain requirements of the Soviet Censor, but I have had the privilege of seeing it privately in company with Oklopkov. He tells me that some of it is not clear to the Workers, it is his mistake so he must simplify. Personally I think that it is inherently a criticism of worker and peasant in certain domains where he fails or has failed, the film points out these weaknesses; and further is decidedly intellectual. But I will deal more fully with these points another time. Suffice now to say: it is a great film, with new developments. Oklopkov was first a Regisseur of the Masses, bearing out the words of Mayakovsky "The streets shall be our brushes, the squares our palettes." He has organised Mass Demonstrations where upward of 20,000 people have taken part. Then he was Regisseur at Meyerhold's Theatre. He took an active part also in stage and costume designing, and acting. He took a small but excellent rôle in Alexander Room's film *The Death Ship*. Then he made his first experimental film *Meta* and his second *Sold*

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(of which at moment we have no details): his third and last picture is *The Way of the Enthusiast* which has excited the attention of all the film world here. The film took six to seven months to complete, and has only one trained actor, the rest being drawn from the people. Oklopkov is 30 years of age.

H. P. J. M.

“A STARRING VEHICLE”

Dolly macht Karriere (*Dolly's career*) or “How to make a silly film with a clever girl.”

Dolly Haas . . . where have I heard that name? Yes, it was last winter in Berlin, in a small cabaret started by young intellectual artists. There was a girl on the small stage, pretty, lively; and she sang and danced some English show-song in the most fascinating way; what a charming English girl they have got here! we thought, until—yes, until a big blue apron was handed to her from behind the curtain, she put it on, shoved her hair behind her ears, legs straddled, hands on hips, and started a market-woman's dialogue, swearing in the toughest Berlin slang—we were puzzled; now what is she? Confusion still increased when she appeared as French “disease”—long black sleeves, etc., and sang a sentimental French chanson, very French, very subtle;

always making fun by slight exaggeration of the style, always finding out the most essential in it. And she was discovered. By Pallenberg first, then came Max Reinhardt and at last—supreme coronation!—the Ufa! There is a pretty girl, with a beautiful voice, slender legs, sparkling with vivacity, most skilful in acrobatics, with a great gift for imitating and parody—what else could she become but a tone film-star? And so they determined to build a film for her, around her; sparkling with her many talents. Listen to the exciting and most true-to-life topic: Dolly, a little milliner-girl has just lost her job, because of insolent behaviour, wants to go to the theatre as actress, and especially to sing a “hit” which her friend Fred, the clarinettist has composed, but as he does not believe in her talent (explained in a great duet) she makes up her mind to become an actress without his aid and his knowing, goes to an agency, puts on the uniform of the office-boy there, is discovered by a director who just needs an actress like her for to-morrow. And she becomes the star of his cabaret. Her friend Fred reads in the newspaper of this wonderful new actress (which he does not recognise as his friend Dolly) and determines to ask her to sing his “hit,” goes to the theatre, talks to Dolly, though he does not see her as she is sitting behind a folding screen, not quite understanding why he is turned out so violently by the unknown actress. But—*deus ex machina*—there is an old Earl, though in love with Dolly, respecting the love of the two young people, manages to make the director engage Fred as clarinettist and Dolly sing his “hit,” and so it happens; Fred sitting in the orchestra beneath the stage still does not recognise Dolly until the very end—which is very happy.

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There is a lot of good acting in this film. Dolly dancing on the piano, on the window, on the roof, Dolly in trousers, with much on, with less on; and some of her fellow-actors are excellent. But—YOU go and make a good film from this scenario! Is it really necessary that the sound-film has to go through all the stages of theatre, and to combine all the nonsense of musical comedies and shows? And, dear me, how do the authors rack their brains to make an “original” beginning; but I am sure, this time they succeeded marvelously: for the actors present themselves by stepping out from a big heart painted on a picture postcard. Sweet and so symbolical, isn't it?

T. W.

CINEMA LITERATURE

I. FRANCE.

At 2.37 p.m. upon a June afternoon in 1922, Abel Gance made a list of his artistic preferences.* From Ronsard, Homer, Hugo, Poe, via de Vinci, Rembrandt, Watteau, to Stendhal, Balzac and Tolstoy.

At 4.45 p.m. Gance's preferences had changed and a more thrilling list is presented. Novalis, Rimbaud, Cendrars,

* *Prisme* by Abel Gance. (Published by Libraire Gallimard.)

Claudél, Gide . . . Honegger, La musique hindoue . . . Shakespeare . . . Molière—Cinematographic! Gide and his *Voyage au Congo*; Honegger, whose music was synchronised to *J'avais un fidèle amant*; Shakespeare a "point of appeal" in Fairbank's *Taming of the Shrew*; Molière, the portrayal of whose *Tartuffe* must have given such joy to Jannings; also Cendrars, and presumably Gance means Blaise Cendrars, original still among modern living French authors.

Le Plan de l'Aiguille by Blaise Cendrars (c'est à toi, mon cher Abel, que je dédie ce roman) commences the adventures of Dan Yack, which lead on to a later volume *Les Confessions de Dan Yack*, a book not written but entirely dictated into a Dictaphone. "Rouleaux" take the place of "chapitres" to describe the film company, which the rich adventurer Dan Yack founds in order to see his beloved Mireille upon the screen. The realism of Mireille's descriptions of their visits together to the quaint local cinema makes one doubt if the facts are entirely fictitious. "Quand c'était un film de Louise Fazenda qui passait, on louait la loge pour huit jours et nous venions tous les jours l'applaudir. Mon grand avait une véritable passion pour la Fazenda, il la dénichait dans tous les films, même dans ceux où elle ne faisait que de la figuration. Il disait que c'était la femme la plus comique du monde parce qu'elle ne faisait pas comique, mais qu'elle était naturellement gauche."

Gance who admires Cendrars, Cendrars who dedicates to Gance, Cendrars who in 1919 wrote *La Fin du Monde*, Gance who to-day makes the film *La Fin du Monde*.

Versatile Cendrars, author of such subjects as *Anthologie*

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Nègre and 19 *Poèmes Elastiques* besides a cherishable little booklet *L'A B C du Cinema*, dated 1921 published in 1926 and which, though containing a mere 1,500 words, is in real Parisian manner issued as a limited edition.

Copy No. 61 of the A B C holds proud position on the cinema-library shelf next to Jean Epstein's little volume *Cinéma*, surely the most curious booklet on the subject ever conceived. "Nazimova, Suprême, Perle, Champagnisée," white letters on a black background, and "Nazi, Nazi, Nazimow, Nazimowa, tourne OH tourne pour la Metro," thick black letters upon two white pages paid tribute in 1921 to one who was "trépidante et exothermique" but who is to-day alas forgotten and left without even the recognition of having created one of the Films Till Now. "Bonjour" greets the first page of Epstein's little book and the last two pages represent film-strips, the first projecting "Bonsoir" with "Merci" just making its appearance, the second acknowledging "Merci" while "Bonsoir" is slipping off the top of the page.

Another curious French cinema book is *Drames sur Celluloïd* by the young cinéaste Pierre Chenal, who is at present completing a documentaire *Bâtir*, a comprehensive study on building illustrated in particular by unique examples of Corbusier's architecture.

Chenal's "Drames" are complete filmlets, some just momentary gags, but all written in a new kind of cinematic blank verse, each line of which is capable of being visualised. *Qualité Extra* is short and perhaps most representative of Chenal's verbal-visual literature:

Un chateau en ruines sur la terrasse d'un gratte-ciel
 Trois bébés arpentent le ciment en mâchonnant un cigare
 Le châtelain—douillettement enveloppé de coton hydro-
 phile—bégaie
 La châtelaine—une ligne à la main—se penche sur Broad-
 way
 et ramène à elle douze Américains de taille moyenne
 Un bébé tire un coup de revolver et demande si le déjeuner
 est servi.

These scenarios are yet to be produced; the skit on the talky in which the sounds go wrong and the very amusing experiment for a colour film are original and would make ideal productions.

The first four volumes of the series *L'Art Cinématographique* have previously been criticised in *Close Up*, but meanwhile two new volumes have been added to the list and Volume No. 7 is in course of preparation. *Hollywood au Ralenti* by C. Meunier-Surcouf is a reportage on the life and conditions in Hollywood, where the author worked for a considerable time. It is sincere and not exaggerated and gives a glimpse of that side of Hollywood life, which the Americans rarely offer us the opportunity of imagining. Describing the cemetery, which appears to be one of the most charming places in Hollywood, the author writes: "C'est vraiment un des endroits où il ne serait pas désagréable de vivre à Hollywood, hors de la trépidation des Street Cars, de la foule des voitures et de l'agitation d'une vie artificielle dans un cadre de décors."

The sixth volume of *L'Art Cinématographique* (Félix

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Alcan, Paris) is divided into sections as are the earlier volumes. *Le Décor* is discussed by Robert Mallett-Stevens, the Parisian architect who has designed many of the décors for L'Herbier. The section *Le Costume* could not have been treated by a greater authority than Boris Bilinsky. The costume for the cinéma must characterise, suggest the actor's personality. A good costume indicates by its appearance the probable thoughts of the actor.

Le Maquillage is treated trivially by Maurice Schutz, and finally there is a long and constructive chapter on *La Technique* by A.-P. Richard.

The Parisian literary vogue seems at present to be American reportage; and newspapers, magazines and books are full of it. That the cinema is recognised as forming a considerable part of public life is proved by the amount of space devoted to a survey of the cinema in nearly all of these reportages.

Scènes de la Vie Future by Georges Duhamel (Mercure de France, Paris) caused the greatest uproar amongst cinéphiles, for Duhamel with a bitter memory of the American cinema tended in his book to generalise and wrote in flowing style a complete chapter upon the cinema in which appeared the remark rapidly becoming classic: "C'est (le cinéma) un divertissement d'ilotes, un passe-temps d'illettrés, de créatures misérables, ahuries par leur besoin et leurs soucis."

Further criticisms of the American cinema are to be read in *Champions du Monde* by Paul Morand and in *Un Œil Neuf sur l'Amerique* by Paul Achard.

The French cinema in literature is summed up at its best

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in the special Cinema number of the review *Le Rouge et le Noir* (July, 1928). Abel Gance, Jean Epstein, Germaine Dulac, Marcel l'Herbier, René Clair, Alexandre Arnoux, Paul Gilson, Georges Charensol and Léon Moussinac represent only one half of the names collected in this one very representative number.

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

CHARACTERISATION OF SOUND TALKIES

(This interesting essay comes to us from a Japanese student in Japan, whose viewpoint indicates that the unimaginative use of sound in talking-films is exercising the minds of film-workers in Japan, as much, and perhaps more, than in the Occident.—*Ed.*)

I

To-day's talkies are, one must admit, wanting in the most important technique of the expression of sound. With what consciousness have sounds been transmitted to films since talkies were born? Were they not applied only to give the film a scientific reality or to please the innocent audience with the novelty that action and sound are synchronised to their great curiosity? Thus we hear the pattering when the people in a movie are clapping their hands and hear the song when

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Nancy Carroll opens her mouth. It is very wrong for talkies to be contented with such sounds only. I advocate with all my heart that it is necessary for talkies to accomplish a *characterisation of sound*.

II

What is meant by the words "characterisation of sound"? To simplify matters, I will explain the words "characterisation of image" in relation to silent pictures first. *A Woman of Paris*, the immortal work by Charles S. Chaplin, will afford a good instance for us. In this picture there is a scene in which Jean (Carl Miller) calls on Marie in her mansion in Paris for the first time after leaving his country. A maid-servant comes in, searches in the cabinet for a dress, when a collar falls on the floor from the cabinet. C. S. Chaplin showed a distinct contrast between the collar and the head of Jean, who had not failed to see it fall. In this case the collar was not only a mere collar, but it could be a "character" informing him of the fact that Marie (Edna Purviance) was living with a man (Adolphe Menjou). In other words, the collar was elevated to a personal level and related to Jean in spirit. This is a characterisation of image which we had commonly during the silent-picture age. As for talkies, in the same way, I assert my slogan "characterisation of sound" through which means only sounds are able to have dramatic participation in talkies. I will explain by an example: a train is about to leave the station. Then we hear (from screen) the steam-whistle blowing and wheels sounding. The sound in this instance is merely a descriptive one

and has no character. We see, on the contrary, the sound distinct from the above one in the situation which Pudovkin, famous Russian film director, has proposed in a recent number of the *Licht-Bild-Bühne*: a wife goes to the station with her husband. The train is going to start. At that moment she recollects that she must say something to him, but cannot think of it in concrete form. She grows more and more impatient. Then she hears the steam whistle blowing and the wheels sounding. (An hallucination!) She is more and more irritated. The sound of the starting train rushes into her ears. Yet the train is seen standing in its place. In this case the sound is never a "realised" sound, but is a character related to and acting on the wife, expressing the feeling of impatience. We see for the first time in this case the sound which is animated dramatically by a "talkie" technique. As for sound in the cinema, I consider its characterisation as a matter of utmost importance. A brilliant future in its application is promised in the cinema, because it is a unique art which has the privilege of free contrast between sound and image.

III

Characterisation of sound is classified into two divisions, according as to whether the object acted on directly by its characterised sound is the other character in the cinema or outside the cinema. The one is realised in the above situation proposed by Pudovkin, the other by the following situation which I have imagined: A kitchen. The maidservant comes in, begins to boil eggs and sits down. She recalls

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having been insulted by her master without any real reason. She is more and more provoked. Then the sound of the boiling water is produced becoming louder and louder. In this case the sound of the water does not act upon her, but is a character agent acting upon the other character outside the cinema (that is, the audience), expressing her anger.

There is a particular case in the characterisation of sounds, which comes from their special nature. That is, when we hear a sound only, it is permitted for us in the strictly limited sphere to be able to recognise the conception of the sounding body, (the source of the sound). Thus the audience, hearing the sound only, cannot understand from what kind of source it comes and will suffer embarrassment and displeasure. Although this truth, in a sense, narrows the practicable ranges of characterisation of independent sound, (but readers, don't be anxious! As described in the foregoing chapter, in cinema every free contrast between image and sound is possible), in the other sense the sound is found to have an extraordinary characterisation effect called *suspense*. On this point I except suspense-effect given by the sound in talkies. As one of the excellent examples in which the characterisation as suspense was successful, we have had a recent talkie *Welcome Danger*, featuring Harold Lloyd. The black scene accompanied by the sound only (the object acted upon is the audience), and the gag by means of the hand organ (the object Harold). We know as a matter of fact that an innumerable number of talkies were produced carrying on detective stories, but it is doubtful whether the directors had accepted the standpoint of my recognition concerning sound, because in those detective talkies were found

almost no efforts to succeed in obtaining good effects with sound. It seems to me that easiness of informing the course of ratiocination was the chief motive in their productions. I heard that Robert Sherwood—so it is reported in Japan—abused the mystery-murder-case story in talkie form under the title *Talkie No. 1*. But this is an excellent place for playing talkie technics.

According to the definition of physics, sound is a hearing sense for vibrations of medium transmitted by a vibrating body (the source of the sound). In this meaning the sound implies man's voice, songs, music, animal cries and sounds of bodies, each of which has different characteristics in the nature of its sounding, and cannot be discussed in the same way: the first two can express thoughts, music can be emotional, and the contrary. The last two, in the ordinary sense, have no sentiment, to say nothing of thoughts. The word "sound," used in foregoing sections, is limited in its implication only to sounds having no sentiment or thought. But even the other sounds, namely man's voice and music can be reduced to the sound of my implication when the sentiments or thoughts they have in their original nature do not matter whatsoever in the emotional structure of the film. And then reduced sounds can be again characterised. The instance with music reduced and characterised is seen in *Smiling Irish Eyes* directed by William Seiter, Kathleen (Colleen Moore), having misunderstood Rory (James Hall) on the stage, walks along the street, when she hears the ballad *Smiling Irish Eyes* coming from every loud speaker and gramophone and covers her ears. In this case the sweetness or emotion of the ballad is out of the question. It may

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be a mere series of noises, for it is enough now that it may be only recognised by Kathleen to be *Smiling Irish Eyes*. That is, the ballad, which is music, and, at the same time, a man's voice, is reduced to mere sound and then characterised. Such a use of the voice must be elevated to great meaning by many critics and directors, because *it does not break the internationality of cinema*, the destruction of which is in question since the present talkie age began.

IV

As it is not desirable for readers that my essay should be too prolonged, I will put aside my pen after considering one further point in conclusion. It is this: that scientific improvements must be expected so that characterisation of sound may exercise its power to the fullest extent, especially in two particulars: the one is related to the purity or clearness of sound heard from the screen by the audience; the other is the range of sound recorded on film, which must be enlarged more than it is now. The clearer the sound, that is, the more representational of the real sound, the more sharply is made the characterisation of sound. As for the range of sound, to-day's talkie can only absorb the sounds of thirty to five thousand in frequency, (the number of vibrations per second). To realise the great possibilities of characterisation of sound in talkie, a loud sound shaking the talkie theatre to its foundation and a trifling sound as of dripping water are both necessary.

YASUSHI OGINO.
Japan, 1930.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

Fewer illustrations are included in the November *Close Up* than is usual, as it is intended to make the December issue an illustrated record of the Second Congress of the Independent Cinema and a survey of experimental work done in Europe during the year.

AN INTERESTING NEW DIRECTOR.

TWO COMMENTS ON ONE MAN.

When Cavalcanti was in London to see his films at the Avenue Pavilion, I asked him if he intended to study the talkies which were, at the time, a novelty for a Parisian.

"Study," he replied, "is too big a word; I simply want to look at and hear the new American pictures."

He said a lot more and not all of it was very clear to himself, but I can remember this:

"All these difficult terms relate to art. The cinema is not, strictly, art; for art is something that you can control. You may be able to control a single film but not CINEMA. Really, photography is the simplest way to approach life.

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There are, I admit, rules which you may not break (the film has its own ethics—Youth, Love and Universal Appeal). However clever a man may be, don't you think that once he is in the theatre he will *feel* like anybody else? Is he not human and it it not dark? Please do not judge what I say by the films which I have made; they are experiments to help myself."

Now an English director is putting this into meritorious practise. Oddly, his cameraman is Jimmy Rodgers who shot *En Rade*, *Rien Que les Heures*, and *Yvette*.

Michael Hankinson has, for years, been editing pictures for the Film Society: *New London*, made for the *Under Forty Society*, is his first individual production. It sets out to show the horrors of the slums, the hourly need of new buildings. It is simple (use of fine types, etc.), moving and beautiful (composition and quality of images).

There is a static feeling which is no demerit, rather is it heraldic. Shot of a looked-up-at house: screen parted per pale, two coats; first, argent, slum dwelling semée with tears; second, gules, a statue passant—Pudovkin. Close up of an earwig on child's bed: azure, a ray of sun-arc issuing out of the dexter corner of escutcheon, sable, an insect tusked.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

The "Under Forty Club" is responsible for the production of a *A New London*, a two reel effort made for the purpose of helping the Club's campaign against slums. M. K. Hankinson, directing, has made a neat job of this sombre fragment of working class life. Shots of modern technical

efficiency, aeroplanes, railways, docks, introduce a title establishing London as the workshop of the world, the Capital of an Empire, swiftly followed by shots of disease-ridden slums and derelict streets.

In the out-patients section of an East End hospital a doctor is examining a child, dying of consumption. Only a change of environment can save him. The harassed mother explains despairingly that it is impossible, they are tied to their filthy tenement, over-run with rats and bugs. And in that foul atmosphere the boy dies.

Hankinson's direction is straightforward and sincere, and obviously influenced by a close study of Russian methods. Films of this kind are generally so slovenly and slipshod.

Jimmy Rogers, at the camera, gives us some beautiful dockside compositions, strangely reminiscent of the lucent beauty of *En Rade*. His camera angles mean something. The interiors were shot in the A.C.A. studios and achieve good effects with an admirable economy of material.

R. BOND.

THERE'S MUSIC TO THAT.

Edmund Meisel tells us that the Berlin press was enthusiastic over his music for a Russian cartoon (machines instead of animals) which was screened with the first performance of the talkie, *Potemkin*; the Berlin press had something, too, to say about the sound version of *Potemkin* and there's music to that.

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Markus Productions of Paris signed Meisel for five pictures; the first, *Militarismus*, is already in production. The pictures will be recorded by Tobis in Berlin.

O. B.

THE LEGIONNAIRE.

(Silent)

One would have thought—one would—what with Louis Ralph directing, Hans Stüwe and Eva von Berne starring and the Foreign Legion as theme that something would have come of it, though that Miss von Berne should be doing anything so positively discreditable as to get mixed up with the Foreign Legion ought to have been adequate warning. Because it was never once the real Foreign Legion which crept into the picture though many of these worthy film-studio Legionnaire-boys did try horribly hard to look wicked and pulled the most extraordinary faces when they were disappointed of water. Gee! how they carried on when they reached the fort, laying hands on all the drink (alcoholic too) they could find and threatening to shoot their officers, but Stüwe, brave lad, soon put an end to all that, waving a flag from on high and singing the Legion song (all about honour, discipline, self-control and for all I know sexual abstinence) and just in time too for the treacherous Arabs crawling on their bellies in accordance with the best Arab tradition were hard on the fort and all the bullets of the Legionnaire-boys didn't seem to stop them, but I suppose that song was one

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too much for them because they all started rushing back the way they came and Stüwe was congratulated and decorated the while Miss Berne was crawling in the desert because she had come ever such a long way to find Stüwe and try to take him away from that horrid Legion and must have been quite exhausted only a soldier picked her up so that she arrived in time for the decoration ceremony and threw her arms wide and shouted GEORGE, and my eyes were so full of tears I can't tell you what happened next.

(Yes—and why not give the Legion its due? In the name of vice, brutality, suffering, hatred and crime. Why not?)

H. A. M.

ACCUSÉE, LEVEZ-VOUS!

If I have previously expressed an opinion that René Clair's *Sous les Toits de Paris* was the finest French talking-film I feel justified in saying to-day that it has been eclipsed by Maurice Tourneur's *Accusée, levez-vous!*

The themes of the two films do not of course permit them to be compared, but generalising it can be said that Tourneur has appreciated and utilised to a more advanced degree than Clair the possibilities of sound.

The story, a Mary Duggan theme taking place first behind the scenes of a music-hall and then within the precincts of a law-court, would immediately appear to condemn the film.

On the contrary, for the first time, a back-stage atmosphere has been caught. Narrowness, crowdedness, tiredness are all felt. Tourneur's camera is in every narrow pas-

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sage, girls brush by the lens, en passant a dancing-girl complains in English. Scenes end with naturalness in the middle of a phrase, and counterpoint is so subtly used that it passes unnoticed. The long law-court scene amazingly *untheatrical*. Close-ups, long-shots, moving camera, one feels the whole law-court even when one man is speaking. The old-time actor put in for the sake of comedy, although his enunciation was a pleasure, did not fit into this *cadre* of reality, so ably conveyed by each member of a powerful caste. Gaby Morlay as the accused is brilliant, putting such nuances in her expressions and movements as if she were really living the part. Seldom can one really say that with sincerity. The film is having an enormous success in Paris.

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

A TEXT-BOOK.

THE TALKIES. By John Scotland. *Crosby Lockwood*.
7s. 6d.

I find this a most exhilarating book. It is written in "journalese"; there are no theories in it; it is an entirely practical and technical book on the working of talkies. But because it deals so straightforwardly with the inventions of the men who made the present display of talkies possible, one rises from it with a sense of excitement that such things are possible, with gratitude to the work those men did, and with a little of that vision some at least of them possessed. The fact that all their work is expended on bunk does not worry one at all, for the authors very wisely leave out of

consideration the talkies that are projected on talkie equipment; that does not seem to matter. What we have is an understanding of this thing, this capturing of light and sound. It is such an achievement that the rest does not matter; the talkies that have been made seem to have had no effect. This book burns them out, like sun; or does at any rate to me.

Mr. Hepworth in a foreword says " . . . the silent picture had an opportunity which it never really developed . . . some hint of its potentialities was given in films which . . . called the very forces of nature, storms and flood and forest and savage beasts to be their actors. But the opportunity for real greatness was scarcely touched and producers who had the whole world for an arena preferred the easier way—a puppet-show in a closed-in studio." That is a salutary stone dropped into our minds, and prevents that too-complacent "all's right with the world to come" which usually attacks those who write on mechanical developments, (witness *Hephaestus*). One feels at once that this book won't make any mistakes; so there are no rash prophecies; it leaves you to do that.

"Edison's invention of the talking machine was the result of his effort to give sound to his kinetoscope pictures . . . But the people went crazy over the picture and disregarded the dialogue, and so it happened that the two became separated in the very beginning and it was not until thirty years later that ten thousand inventors set to work to bring them together again." There, in a nut-shell, you have the story, and succeeding chapters inspect and expand it. All the various attempts to produce talking pictures are recounted;

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the whole field is surveyed, and then every different system is examined. We are taken into laboratories, printing rooms, studios and even the projection-room itself. There is little mention of actors; they come in when the work is done. The talkies are a mechanical affair and this book is the book of the mechanics. Inventors and operators are the heroes. We learn how talkies are made possible. This seems so much more important than what they are used on, for this is the root of the business. There are excellent illustrations of such things as photo-cells, blimps, developing plants, talkie projectors at the Plaza, variable area sound-film and contact prints from Technicolor negative. There is a plate showing the first apparatus to make a film—Frieze-Green's outfit, and the frontispiece shows the Paramount studios. Finally there is a chapter on colour-processes. I have a feeling that this book will be missed by many because it deals only with practical problems and is unpretentious; but it teaches one the working of talkies and there is no one whose opinions will not benefit by knowing that. *The Talkies* is simply a text-book, which has the advantage of being entirely technical and perfectly easy to understand.

R. H.

PHYSIOPOLIS.

M. Jean Dreville is shortly presenting in Paris his film *Physiopolis*, made recently at Villennes, that stronghold of the French Naturists, where young men and women make

their bodies perfect under the sun. . . It is described as of a "grande intensité de vie," and will be photographed as beautifully as the recent *When the Ears of Corn Bend Over*. Mr. Dreville writes :

This film will initiate us into the life—always a little mysterious until now—of the French Naturists. It is possible that this fascinating subject will be found by some, shocking in various degrees, just as among others it will be found—and rightly so—particularly chaste and healthy. It will be, nevertheless, a cinégraphique document, technically original, and—who knows?—by the revelations which it makes—a factor in the physical and moral uplifting of the race !

The presentation to the Parisian press will be preceded by a discussion by Madame Dussane, of the Society of the Comedie Française, or Doctors Gaston or André Durville.

This film was made entirely in the surroundings of Villennes, director and cameraman leaving modesty in the cloak-room, and being bound by the severe but salutary regime of the naturists : No alcoholic drinks, *pain complet*, tomatoes and apples in oil, delicious bananas. . . One of the two was even subjected to the traditional and miserable effects of sunburn. He will remember it all his life, having generously left his epidermis and skin of his back on the field *de prise de vues*.

O, Cinema, what crimes of *lèse-beauté* are committed in thy name !

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FROM THE REPORT OF THE FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF FEDERATION OF WORKERS' FILM SOCIETIES, SEPTEMBER, 1930.

Censorship.

At one of the early meetings of the Council consideration was given to the petition on Censorship, organised by *Close Up*. The purpose of this petition was to agitate for the creation of a special Censorship Board and a special Censorship category for films of proved artistic, educational and technical merit. While sympathising strongly with the objects of the *Close Up* petition the Council considered that the petition did not go far enough and that some wider method of challenging the Censorship should be worked out. With this in view the Council decided to approach the R.A.C.S. who control a cinema in Tooting. The Council asked the R.A.C.S. to receive a deputation and it was intended to ask the R.A.C.S. if they would co-operate with the Federation in challenging the Censorship and the authority of the L.C.C. by allowing the London Workers' Film Society to exhibit in the Tooting Hall an uncensored film. The R.A.C.S. however, declined to receive a deputation from the Federation.

A little while after this an All-Party Committee was formed in the House of Commons for the purpose of agitating for a change in the Censorship Regulations, and particularly in the L.C.C. regulations governing exhibitions by private Film Societies. The Federation supplied various material and information to a number of M.P.'s who were members of the London W.F.S. The L.C.C. has now adopted certain

new regulations governing private Film Societies in the London area, which while in some respects are a step forward, are in other respects still very unsatisfactory, in so far that while films not submitted to the Censors can be exhibited by bona fide private Film Societies, films that have been rejected by the Board of Censors cannot be shown.

Previous to this the London W.F.S. had applied to the L.C.C. for permission to exhibit uncensored films, but this application had been rejected in spite of the fact that such privileges had been accorded to the London Film Society. The London W.F.S. rightly interpreted this decision as an act of class bias and conducted an agitation against it, and it can be claimed with some justification that such changes as have now taken place under the new L.C.C. regulations are to some extent due to the constant agitation of the London W.F.S.

HOLLYWOOD NOTES.

Improvement in portable sound-recording equipment is resulting in a wholesale return to the making of out-of-door pictures. Mostly these are the perennially popular Westerns, known in Hollywood lingo as "Horse Operas." Following *In Old Arizona*, we have had *The Texan*, *The Virginian*, *The Big Trail*, *The Border Legion*, *Arizona Kid*, *The Santa Fe Trail*, as well as several others of like character, and many more are either contemplated or already in production. Not only is it possible in the making of such pictures to convey

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sound-recording apparatus to the most distant locations, but portable film laboratories and projection machines are also now part of a travelling company's equipment; so that the "rushes" may be viewed on location immediately following a day's "shooting," thus making it possible, if necessary, to have retakes made at once.

* * *

The Fox Grandeur film for enlarged projection now has a competitor in an invention recently perfected by M-G-M's technical staff. Designated as "Realife," this film makes possible the projection of wide-screen pictures with an ordinary projector, so that no change in theatre equipment is necessary. In this respect it offers a decided advantage over Grandeur. The first picture to be filmed with Realife is King Vidor's current production, *Billy the Kid*.

* * *

Los Angeles, of which Hollywood is a one-tenth section, has the distinction of being the first city in the United States to establish a motion-picture theatre devoted exclusively to the showing of foreign-language films. These are not imported productions, but films made in Hollywood for the various foreign markets. The theatre, named The California International, one of the largest and most pretentious in the city, opened its doors in August with the showing of *El Cuerpo del Delito*. This has since been followed by other Spanish pictures, as well as French, German, and Italian. Out of Los Angeles' population of one and a half million there are approximately two hundred and fifty thousand who are Spanish-speaking. As to those of other nationalities, it is estimated there are enough of them, together with Ameri-

cans familiar with various languages, to insure a profitable patronage of this unique cinema.

* * *

Hollywood is threatened with competition both to the north and the south of it. The Canadian-American Talking Picture Studios, Ltd., are reported as ready to launch the building of a large studio near Montreal, with a view to producing "shorts," serials, and news films, as well as talking features. As a competitor specifically for the Spanish-speaking market, a project is under way to establish a million-dollar studio in Agua Caliente, in the Mexican state of Lower California. This project has also the incidental object of adding a further attraction to Agua Caliente, a recently established gaming resort, much frequented by the sporting element of Hollywood, and with ambitions to become a second Monte Carlo.

* * *

Under the title of Metropolitan Productions, Ltd., the RKO film company have launched a subsidiary organisation for the producing of stage plays which will subsequently be filmed and transferred to the screen. To this end the company have leased a theatre in Los Angeles, where the new plays will first be put on and tried out. Should any of them prove a decided hit they will be given a further stage showing in New York prior to screening.

* * *

Mary Pickford has decided to stick to films—at least to the extent of one more trial in the talkies. She had been seriously considering a proposal to appear on the New York stage, the refuge now of many a Hollywood "has been."

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But this plan has been shelved for the nonce and she is preparing, under Joseph Schenck's management, to do a talking version of *Kiki*, which Mrs. Schenck, otherwise known as Norma Talmadge, brought to the silent screen a few years ago.

* * *

Mary's husband has likewise, after much indecision and hesitation, decided to stake his reputation on another talkie—*Reaching for the Moon*. It is significant, however, that the publicity in regard to it emanating from the Schenck organisation is laying particular stress on the many notable personalities associated with it. Heretofore the mere announcement of a Fairbanks picture was regarded as enough in itself. Its author, its director, its leading lady and its other characters were of slight moment. In the present instance, however, emphasis is being laid on the fact that Fairbanks is to be supported by Bebe Daniels and Edward Everett Horton; that the author of the scenario is William Anthony McGuire, one of America's leading playwrights; that the director of the film is Edmund Goulding, who leaped into fame with Swanson's *The Trespasser*; and that the supervisor of the production is Irving Berlin, who is also contributing the musical score. Apparently, therefore, the lustre of Fairbanks' name is no longer alone considered sufficient to insure profit and éclat for a picture.

* * *

Lawrence Tibbett's next picture, to be directed by King Vidor for M-G-M, will be *The Southerner*. Greta Garbo, having completed the German version of her *Annie Christie*, will next essay the rôle of an ultra-modern French siren in

Inspiration, directed by Clarence Brown. The classic *East Lynne*, with its maudlin drama, is under way at the Fox studios, with Ann Harding of *Holiday* fame in the leading rôle and supported by Clive Brook and Conrad Nagel. Jackie Coogan, now quite grown up since his screen debut in Chaplin's *The Kid*, is returning to the films, under the Paramount banner, as Tom Sawyer in Mark Twain's immortal story. Universal studios are filming the horrific *Dracula* under the direction of Tod Browning. Jack Buchanan, of the London musical stage, will make his first Hollywood appearance in Lubitsch's comedy for Paramount, *Monte Carlo*. M-G-M are photodramatizing Wicky Baum's *Menschen Im Hotel* for Joan Crawford. The same company have purchased the screen rights to the Hungarian musical play, *Katica*, by Ferenc Martos and Fred Markus, and will shortly put it into production.

C. H.

A.S.C. : ITS ANNUAL.

The American Society of Cinematographers, Hollywood, California, U.S.A., has published its first Cinematographic Annual. It is interesting to observe the film from the viewpoint of the cameraman, the least known of the workers in the cinema. The A.S.C.'s monthly, *The American Cinematographer*, is too much like a house organ (you-kiss-me-I'll-kiss-you) to afford a real understanding of the full wisdom

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of the cameraman, who calls himself a cinematographer. The journal intends to appeal to the amateur—confused with the “fan”—and therefore innocuous and fatuous blurbs on Mary Astor and her *Filmo* are published. But here is a symposium, so to speak, on the motion picture by trained technicians. I list the essays: Cinematography an Art Form, Lewis W. Physioc; Cinematics, Slavko Vorkapich; The Evolution of Film; Optical Science in Cinematography, W. B. Rayton; The Evolution of the Motion Picture Professional Camera, Joseph A. Dubray; Composition in Motion Pictures, Daniel Bryan Clark; Painting with Light, Victor Milner; Sensitometry, Emery Huse; Light Filters and their Use in Cinematography, Ned Van Buren; Borax Developer Characteristics, H. W. Moyse and D. R. White; Materials for Construction of Motion Picture Processing Apparatus, J. I. Crabtree, G. E. Matthews and J. F. Ross; Effect of the Water Supply in Processing Motion Picture Film, J. I. Crabtree and G. E. Matthews; The Art of Motion Picture Make-Up, Max Factor; Pictorial Beauty in the Photoplay, William Cameron Menzies; Philosophy of Motion Pictures, George O'Brien; Wide Film Development, Paul Allen; The Still Picture's Part in Motion Pictures, Fred Archer; Motion Picture Studio Lighting with Incandescent Lamps, R. E. Farnham; Colour Rendition, Jackson J. Rose; Motion Pictures in Natural Colour, Hal Hall and William Stull; The Ancestry of Sound Recording, H. G. Knox; The Nature of Sound, A. W. Nye; Architectural Acoustics, Vern O. Knudsen; Sound Personnel and Organisation, Carl Dreher; Motion Picture Sound Recording, by R.C.A. Photophone System, R. H. Townsend; by Fox Film Company, E. H. Hansen;

by Western Electric Method, Donald Mackenzie; Recording in the Theatre, S. K. Wolf; by R.C.A. Photophone System, John O. Aalberg; Technic of Recording Control for Sound Pictures, J. P. Maxfield; Dubbing Sound Pictures, K. F. Morgan; Recording Sound on Disc, Nugent H. Slaughter; Non-Theatrical Motion Pictures, Milton Stark; Cinematography Simplified, William Stull; The Dusenbery System of Estimating Exposure, H. Cyril Dusenbery; Micro-Cinematographic Apparatus, Heinz Rosenberger.

I begin with a consideration of the articles on the esthetics of the motion picture. John F. Seitz, president of the A.S.C., writes passionately in his Introduction: "The motion picture of to-day is the greatest medium of expression the world has ever known . . . so will the motion picture of the future be superior to writing in expressing every concrete form and phase of human endeavor. . . While not so pure an art form as poetry, painting, sculpture, music or the drama," (how pure an art form is the last?) "it can partake something of the special properties of these arts and combine them into a unified whole." On the whole, this is a sensible introduction, presenting truisms with sincerity and a calm ardor. Indeed, Mr. Seitz renders Mr. Physioc's essay possessing no specific stipulations but speaking of "artist," "individuality," "feeling" in the manner of a Chautauqua evangelist or a writer of books on success, not only useless but somewhat obscene. Both quote; but in what purports to be a serious call to action, unilluminated quotations are pomposities only. Vorkapich's essay starts me off wrong with this juvenilism—how much longer, O Lord!—"There—in that one word—*motion*—we have perhaps our clue." Timid?

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why "*perhaps*"? I begin to writhe: "Motion is energy visualised, therefore motion is a symbol of life itself. Immobility is death. And yet, there is no immobility—within every atom the infinitesimal electrons keep on whirling." Vorkapich admits he finds writing difficult. Why was not a visual-minded person (as Vorkapich says he is) who could write asked to do the job? Arts he finds two: static and spatial; dynamic and temporal; and now a third—the movie. There is truth in this; but I prefer a more useful terminology—intensive and progressive; with the movie the progressive moving toward the intensive: here is the description of the film's nature and evolution. Vorkapich recognises that continuous motion (action) is not the most valid. *Pause* is motion (rhythm) as are *visual changes*, such as "lap-dissolves, fades, changes of focus, changes in iris, rhythmical cutting, etc. The last mentioned is one of the most important elements of expressive cinematography. Montage, of course—or, as the French have called it, "interior movement." Vorkapich lists kinds of "exterior movements," the motion of the materials performing. By distilling the actual from the maze of words, one can obtain from Vorkapich's thesis valuable *details*.

When we enter into the technical chapters, we are in a field of certain foliage, a dependable encyclopedia prepared by experienced men. I pause a moment with Menzies, the winner of the 1928 award of merit of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for outstanding in Motion Picture Art Direction. The very title of his contribution to this volume is borrowed from Victor Freeburg's book of several years ago. This fact of borrowing serves to describe Menzies. He

is an unoriginal fetish, for whose work the soggy adjective "artistical" can be used in place of "artistic"—he isn't even virtuoso enough to be called "arty." The United Artists' featurettes he makes with Hugo Riensenfeld—a "quince-kneed" Roxy—are abominations of columned light, ornamental arrangements to the most bazaarish conception of the meaning of music. And his article substantiates this reaction: it is a sop to "the newly awakened taste of the public" but doesn't say one basic thing about "pictorial beauty in the photoplay." The few illustrations he presents (to enlighten, evidently, the cameraman) are illustrations only, and the procedure of his work does not yet tell us what are the principles of design in the cinema. "This paper," we are told by The Editor, "was read before a class in appreciation of the Photoplay, at the University of Southern California; a course conducted in conjunction with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences." George O'Brien, Fox Star, says a few words on "Philosophy of Motion Pictures": it explains the difficulties of directors by its adolescent inanity—a success talk to football players: team-work, you know. The photographs in this volume satisfy the "artistical."

But when once into the technical portions, the volume serves a purpose undeniable. Here are materials documentary and explanatory, historical and descriptive, a fundamental course in the machinery of the motion picture, from which an intelligent reader may deduce more about the movie's art than has been presented in the chapters pretending towards art. Some of the technical articles are but fragments, but cumulatively they are informative and comprise a

CLOSE UP

body of basic literature in the workings of the cinema. They justify sufficiently the project of the Annual. I would suggest that the A.S.C. for next year create a board of planning and selection that would include the critical students of the motion picture, and that the volume be concerned with the esthetic and ideologic bases of the art of the film by allowing those who understand such values best treat of them. A Menzies forced to construct an alpha-omega of art direction at work, would be obliged to keep out of pastures he cannot appreciate. In all modesty, I believe that an article like my "Tendencies in the Cinema"—which appeared in the *American Cinematographer*—belongs to the *Cinematographic Annual*. Or Bakshy might be asked to write upon the Screen as an Instrument of the Film.

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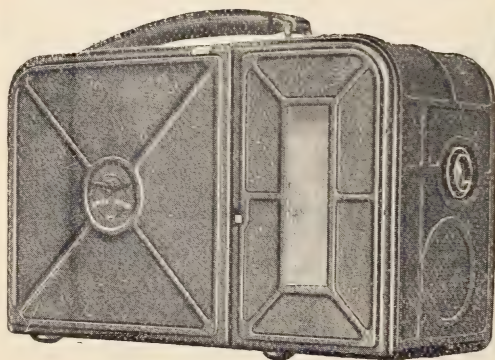
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Vol. VII No. 6

December 1930

AS IS

BY THE EDITOR.

With the commencement of the New Year, *Close Up* will undergo several changes. The principal one will be that we are making it a quarterly instead of a monthly. The second change is in size and formation. It will be very much enlarged, printed on art-paper throughout, and much more fully illustrated, with sub-titles in three languages.

The reasons for this change have been apparent to the editorial staff for some considerable time. With the establishment of the talking film, the world situation with regard to films was completely altered. Whereas, during the period of silent films, world distribution was fluid, now films are becoming more and more tied up within national limits. Circulation has to an enormous extent come to an end.

Switzerland is a good example of this change. Formerly we were in a quite enviable position of being able to see on their release the films of very country—German and French

films were sometimes shown here before or simultaneous with the first-showing in their own country. Italian films, American, of course, Russian, British, Austrian, Swedish. Switzerland had no film-making industry of its own, and was an open market for the world. With the advent of the talking film, all that came to an end. French and German films were shown almost exclusively. In time these will not even enjoy the cantonal exchange they now have. When the French and the German output become large enough, only French films will be shown in the French cantons, and only German in the German.

Then comes the question of the dwindling of public interest in foreign Films which would not be understandable, and in names of actors, directors, and various personalities they have never heard of.

Newcomers to the talking screen will be known only in those countries where their own language is spoken.

Blockage. Journalistically speaking, almost complete blockage. It was evident that there would be no point in *Close Up* trying to continue as before, drawing together trends that are going further and further apart. Some change in method if not in policy was imminently needed. Obviously we could not leave the reporting of foreign films and news to our foreign correspondents, without ourselves entering into the collaboration necessary to sustained knowledge and unified policy. In that way *Close Up* would be destined for a hotch-potch of news that would, as time went on, mean less and less to anybody.

The obvious solution was that the editors and their representatives should make *Close Up*, so to speak, a "traveller"

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—going themselves and taking it with them to various countries, where a systematic and useful analysis of work in progress could be made. But monthly—obviously that would not be possible, nor, in view of the new policy, desirable. A month here and a month there would not be sufficient time to study and see sufficiently. There was also this to think of : that enough relevant material would not be forthcoming. And probably there will be—during the whole period of transition and readjustment that is upon us—less and less. More and more expenditure will be required on the part of film executives, and the higher their costs soar, the more wary they will have to be. Experiment will be confined to technical change—wide screen, stereoscopy, etc. Not to ideas. They will see to it that the films remain sodden with banality and popular appeal. And what will be the point of the independent cinematist continuing for very much longer his experiments on 35 mm. film stock, if there will be no place for his work in any cinema?

For these reasons the idea of *Close Up* as a quarterly took shape. The more we talked about it and thought about it, the more indicated did it seem. Every quarter we would choose some country or some special aspect of development, and make a study of it which would be a record of permanent value in film history. This seemed not only the best, but perhaps the only way to meet the problem. We felt and feel convinced it is the only way in which we are able to continue giving our readers material as valuable to them as we feel we have been able to do until now. Therefore, this number, which completes Vol. 7, will be the last in this series. The next number will appear in *March*, priced at three shillings

and sixpence. Four of these annually will cost fourteen shillings, so that the price will virtually remain the same.

Need we add that we have decided upon taking this step solely in the interests of our readers, and that we do sincerely hope that they will approve this measure to give them something of true value—and will prove it by giving their support as they have done so generously during the three and a half years of our existence “as is.”

THE NEW SPIRIT IN THE CINEMA. By Huntly Carter. Shaylor, 31, Gower Street, W.C. Price 30s. net.

A big book, an enormous book, a bombastic book that wants celluloid to be whalebone corseting Human Thought.

Here is Mr. Carter's acknowledged purpose :

. . . to analyse and interpret the Parallel Paths of the Cinema, which have led to the present Revolutionary Crisis forming a Study of the Cinema as an Instrument of Sociological Humanism.

As such it is a sociologist's book—the sociology of Professor Patrick Geddes and his ilk. A sociologist's book to the exclusion, almost, of cinema. Not a film-minded book, not the book of a cinematic conscience, a bit of a tub-thumping book, loaded with “cultist stress” as our brilliant Potamkin has it, and the inaccuracies and false allegations that are part of the stock-in-trade of the all-seeing, nought-seeing man with a Message.

It is also in parts a very fine book, but it is first on the grounds of his sociological pretensions that the author is to

CLOSE UP

be judged, for he himself is careful to keep them uppermost. He has chosen to carry on the torch of mild liberal complaisance and suave compassion which lies back of the humanist movement. Nietzsche, whittling away to the point of utmost concentration on the finest; Marx, planing everything to common denominator—two such polar extremes whipped in a cocktail shaker might produce the undrinkable Christian lotion which is poured over this survey of the film.

Mr. Carter confesses that he came warily and with prejudice to the kino—many years ago, certainly, when to come at all was something. Yet in this very fact lies that which gives the book its tone. Mr. Carter was already adult, a man of chosen aims and formed tastes, before cinema came under his consideration. As such, his attitude is that of the alien—a naturalised alien perhaps, but an alien on foreign soil. He is not a child of the films. This is an important consideration and makes for a different mental approach. Growing up with a thing is essential to complete experience of it. Not that the viewpoint is any less interesting for that. Nevertheless it is the lay mind speaking, (“another thing that set me against the cinema was photography”) not the cinematic mind.

Thus every film and every film condition is examined under the sociologist's microscope. Will this serve us or will it not. If not it is summarily, a little flippantly discarded.

In form and arrangement *The New Spirit* is an orderly, well-conducted survey—orderly in spite of errors—Eva Lancaster for Elsa Lanchester, designation of *The Man Who Laughs* as a German film, the use of the word “producer” for “director”, etc.—orderly, well written and with certain

power. Mr. Carter wanted to know the answer to these two questions :

What is the driving force behind the Cinema that is responsible for its evolution or devolution? Is it the greed of gold, the craving for investments and dividends? Or is it a desire to benefit human beings?

Could any answer to these questions be simple or true since the questions themselves brindle with impossibly rudimentary bias? What the author asks, in short, is whether the driving force is black or white. Well, why either? What of the spectrum? Why not, for instance, peacock green or magenta?

The only answer possible is one as unrewarding and unlikely to clarify as the questions themselves. Both and neither.

Serving Mammon in the cinema—or anywhere—is simply serving public taste or public need. A simple matter of production and consumption. Which is obvious enough. The cinema is apt to be considered base when it is candid. People, it proves, are at the stage of evolution where the facile and the vulgar are more readily acceptable than reconstructive sermons. “Serving humanity” then is not divorced from giving humanity what it wants, rather than what we—as individuals, as cranks, or in committees and imposing groups—want it to have. Is that misleading people, is it betrayal? But this question of leadership has more crimes of “betrayal”, of impertinent presumption and gangster confederacy at its door than almost any other. Man should be wary of his lust to lead—above all if it is “to the Light.”

It is this confusion of humanity with humane-ity.

CLOSE UP

The nostalgia for harmony among men, which takes itself out in "doing good" to someone or something, has its obverse side, which is making in direct ratio, an enemy of something else. Thus hate and love keep their balance. The nostalgia for harmony is better sublimated into art, where, at least, it can hope for success—and ultimate influence too perhaps.

Oppression gone, harmony established, what happens? "It is always possible to unite considerable numbers of men in love towards one another, so long as there are still some remaining as objects for aggressive manifestations." I quote from Freud's *Civilisation and its Discontents*, a book which I wish to goodness everybody would read and profit by. "I once interested myself in the peculiar fact that peoples whose territories are adjacent, and are otherwise closely related, are always at a feud with and ridiculing each other, as, for instance, the Spaniards and the Portuguese, the North and South Germans, the English and the Scotch, and so on. I gave it the name of narcissism in respect of minor differences, which does not do much to explain it."

Professor Freud does explain it however by the fact of Man's innate love of aggression, against which "not all the massacres of the Jews in the Middle Ages sufficed to procure peace and security for their Christian contemporaries," and on account of which, when "the apostle Paul had lain down universal love between all men as the foundation of his Christian community, the inevitable consequence in Christianity was the utmost intolerance towards all who remained outside of it."

There is a too marked tendency among reformers to find

in the words "aesthetic", "art", etc., something discreditably reactionary—something of the same dismissive self-righteousness with which homosexuality, for example, is banished from social consideration as a "menace", a "smear," and otherwise hushed up. This I consider the real menace. The hardening attitude. "They aim to put the technique of aesthetic where the portrayal of human life should be." The author has his little sneer for "aesthetics" on practically every page! "It seems to me," he continues, "that the only form of art expression (if it may be called art expression) that rightly belongs to the Cinema is that of the natural aesthetic of an object as when a spider weaves a web out of itself, or, as *The Secrets of Nature* picture natural objects unfold and clothe themselves in their own aesthetic. . . ." This is another way of stating that he, like so many others, has fallen into the pitfall of choosing the Western, with its "natural aesthetic" of the outdoors—and its unnatural "nick-of-time" suspense-thrill as full-bodied vigour, when it is really pandying to the troubled, lawless moods of puberty.

Some of the social-minded reformers have sought to malform the significance of the word art to imply the facile enthusiasms of the emotionally unfit. This, I repeat, is the real danger, the real degeneracy. This fear of art and its influence. It marks a regression to philistinism, to cowardice and stultification. Man has progressed only through the finest sharpening of his faculties—faculties which can be sharpened alone by that form of receptivity which is open-mindedness and willingness to *grapple*. In real art there is very little—if anything—that is jejune or flabby. Its

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application when it employs indirect methods is as vital and its influence as apparent. No art of to-day—I repeat no *real* art—is moribund “where the portrayal of human life should be.” That would belie it as a fact and discredit it as an hypothesis. If beauty—which is vigour—is not tapped at its every source, so much the more poor will be become, so much the more withered and unfit. It is the beauty-starved who become sterile, “arty,” as people in slums are victimised by the pestiferous non-sanitation of their dwellings. Art is health.

Well, obviously this fact in some form or another has been recognised by the author, or his book would not have been written.

If he considers the suppression of “art for art’s sake” as justifiable in the promotion of “art for the sake of humanism”, it is because of his failure to recognise the wider aspects of appeal and reference which art for art’s sake must inevitably introduce.

One asks oneself, has Mr. Carter only contempt for those who flock to picture galleries all over the world? Is he ignorant of the fact that the greatest periods of history have been also the great periods of impetus and renaissance in art and culture—superabundant life-force, expressive in the Greek acceptance of the physical and all its attributes, the *athleticism* of its art, degenerate only in its later period of moralising, self-justifying rant—in the social-minded (i.e. critic-conscious outpourings of that great gelding Plato?

The truth is, that “art for art’s sake” is so rare as to be a quality of angels rather than men. How many among the world’s great artists have been blameless (if blame it is to be)

of expediency? Take a look round the Italian rooms in any gallery. You will ask yourself if the "social-mind" of the Renaissance was the establishment of the Catholic church or bringing Jesus to the banquets of the nobles. What were these great craftsmen about? What, indeed, if not "serving Mammon"? In those days the churches were among the richest patrons of the arts, the "buyers". Christian devotion may have inspired the Old Masters, but their works that hung in every church were not free offerings, you may be sure. Botticelli, perhaps the only pagan mind among them, was no better than the rest. Why should he be? When for every virgin he could paint a Venus.

"It was not hard for me to see that pictures with a particular bias, like Griffith's, with their varied theme of intolerance, were likely to be most popular at a period of abnormal receptivity (war time). Devitalised and demoralised folk were bound to crowd the cinemas where the remarkable Cowboy and Company pictures—pictures full of sun and open-air romance and vitality—were waiting to hand it a never-failing tonic." The author might have gone further and stated that in nearly all lives, which are usually drab and repressed, a flashy and cocky heroine in the worst of Adrian's beads and chiffon, is escape, a momentary "wish-fulfilment", and the same with eroticism. For those whose simplest kisses are under the Shadow of the Law, frank, rank and uninhibited demonstrations of sex-appeal in full blast have a tonic—a very humane-itarian—value.

The Awakening of Inner Consciousness is another matter. Really it should be a job for the nursery schools—there's not so much to awaken when people grow older. The inner con-

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sciousness is perhaps better left to lie fallow in a world whose purpose is to make, not slaves so much as high-class domestic servants. The middle-class ideal of the great man is the perfect butler.

In Geneva a cinema specialising in Soviet films failed, while in Lausanne, a poor-district cinema showed *Expiation* and *Mother* to woefully empty houses, although for *Manhattan Cocktail* seats were not to be found. Lack of a Marxian "class-consciousness" may have been back of this, but also in the fully class-conscious northern districts of Berlin the "prolet" film *Menschen am Sonntag* was a bad failure, but *Anna Karenina* had considerable success. These facts rather indicate that the film—the theatre film—is, in Central and Western Europe, escape from and not intensification of the daily problem. I am not trying to justify this—perhaps it needs no justification. It is certainly worth pointing out.

"It is not an exaggeration to say that the pantomime and facial contortions of the early comic one and two reelers flung a huge wave of laughter over the dwellers in the down and out corners of Europe; while the Westerns gave them a general bucking-up, that has never been equalled in the whole history of entertainment."

Mr. Carter's classification of types, facts and material inherent in the marketable film tradition make excellent reading. Real "entertainment value"! A list of don'ts. "Why babies sell." "He-man types", including Great Lovers, Rough-necks, Nice Youths, etc. Rod la Rocque and Monte Blue are among these latter. Richard Dix too. This is giving youth a good fling, speaking with an eye to the calendar, as you might say. Nice people (as distinct from Nice Youths)

such as Dick Arlen, Gary Cooper, Norman Foster, are not mentioned. Lists of wicked men and women and their rôles. Women are vamps, decoys, thieves, among other things. "All alike realise good prices."

On p. 283, the author finds that Bolshevist technique is more of science than "Art". (I think he always alludes to art like that. Inverted commas and a capital. Emphasis on its scurrility!) The reason given is that Pudovkin stated that the film (meaning the celluloid strip) comes first in picture making. Objects are photographed on strips of film. These are cut, sorted, rhythmically assembled and pasted together to form a series of scenes. . . . The author adds "There is no basic creative force required to build up a picture of bits of film any more than there is to assemble a Ford motor. The method enters into the region of tricks." No creative force either, he thinks, in what is photographed on the strips and how scene relates to scene and image to image, and what is thereby achieved. That *just happens*! No doubt there is no basic creative force in sculpture, seeing it is only stone and only hammers and chisels and sinew used to shape it; or in painting a picture, seeing it is done on canvas and only brushes and paint—I think the author would say "flicked about" on it. Well, we learn. Mr. Carter's conception of the word art is as illiterate as the qualities he contrives to find in it—the "Art" of the velvet coat and big bow, of the spiritual weakling whose presence in society may be tolerable—at best useless at worst a pest. Whereas an artist worth the name is the strongest among us, part scientist, part manual-labourer, wholly craftsman, an inveterate worker and a being apart—"a child of Helios."



From a Portuguese sound-film, *A Severa*, which is now being turned by Leitao de Barros. An article on the Portuguese film appears in this issue.



A scene from *A Severa*, a Portuguese sound film, directed by Leitao de Barros.



A scene from *Maria do Mar*, another Leitao de Barros film, made for the Sociedade Universal de Super-Filmes, Lda., at Lisbon.



This old woman, appearing in *Maria do Mar*, is aged 103 years—a late-comer to succumb to the lure of the arc-lamp!



Photos: Courtesy of Leopold Hauk, Vienna

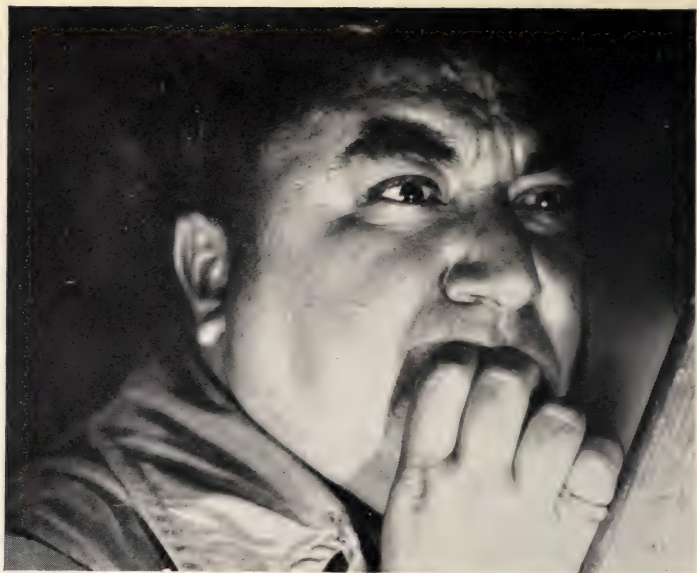
From *So ist das Leben* (*Such is Life*), a silent film which has had great success in Germany and Austria, directed by Jungmans for Wengeroff-Film. On left, Vera Baranovskaya, who again, after her triumph as *Mother*, in Pudovkin's film of that name, plays the part of a suffering woman whose life is sacrificed to husband and daughter. On the right is the sympathetic neighbour who shares the same floor.



From So ist das Leben.



Photos: Courtesy of Leopold Hauk, Vienna



Kurt Gerron in *Dolly's Career*, an Ufa-Tonfilm, composed as a starring vehicle for Dolly Haas, a newcomer to the screen. A Bloch-Rabinovitsch Production, directed by Anatol Litwak.



Dolly Haas and Alfred Abel in *Dolly's Career*. An article on Dolly Haas and her first film appeared in our last month's issue. She has won the admiration of the most exacting specialists.



From *Das gestohlene Gesicht (The Stolen Face)*, an Ufa-Tonfilm, by Bruno Dudlay. On left : Hans Otto and Margitta Zonewa. On right : Edith Edwards and Hans Otto.



From the new Erich Pommer-Ufa Production, *Einbrecher* (*The Burgler*), a tone-film directed by Hanns Schwarz. Scenes in the Negro-bar.



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Well, there it is. These books go on and on.

For those who can or want to spend the sum of thirty shillings there is much of value in it. The humanists will lick it up like anything. Many will be much impressed and so much the better. These works should not be wasted.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

THE CINEMA IN PORTUGAL

Portugal, at the western extreme of Europe, has not been always so effaced as it is to-day. With its small surface and some million inhabitants, it was once a great and powerful colonial empire. With Africa, the Indies, Brazil at its feet, the whole of Europe rendered homage. This was in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when Portugese navigators, urged by the instinct of adventure and ambition, sailed from Lisbon in frail boats, bent on discovering new worlds and the annexation of new lands. But . . . as that is all far off . . . the grandeur of Portugal was ephemeral.

The Portuguese, intrepid *navegadores*, and brave fighters, were but poor colonisers. Though they uncovered so wide a portion of hidden land, gave rise to fantastic legends, risked their lives in the most heroic exploits, they were unable to colonise the lands they discovered, nor manage for long the

great empire they had conquered. Little by little Portugal was to lose her colonies, and with them her grandeur and power. Falling from day to day, and even hour to hour, she was effaced while other countries developed intensively, imposing new civilizations . . . and Portugal—great as she had been—fell into oblivion, following, sorrowful and impoverished, in wake of other peoples.

One remembers this even with regard to the terrible war of 1914-18. Once again Portugal marched in the same rhythm as the rest of Europe, sending her sons to fight beside the sons of France throughout that horrible butchery—a hell created by the savagery, the evil, the hypocrisy of a halfdozen men for their unique profit. This war was yet another deep wound in the heart of Portugal, from which, even today, it is still severely suffering.

It was just a few years before the European war that the Portugese cinema was born.

* * *

It is almost thirty years since some enthusiasts commenced to turn the first *bandes*: insignificant documents at first, some comedies no more remarkable than the documentaries. But it was not until immediately after the war that the cinema in Portugal underwent an intensive development. During the period 1920-23 a feverish activity possessed the centres of film production, especially at the Invicta-Film studios at Oporto. In spite of this *élan*, grave errors were at first perpetrated, not errors, solely, of artistic judgment, but more particularly from the point of view of commerce. Nevertheless, the production of such films as *Os Lobos*, *Os Fidalgos da Casa Mourisca*, *Amor de Perdição*, *Claudia*, proved that there

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was nothing to be feared in comparison with the current productions which arrived in Portugal from abroad.

But our directors, as well as those who had been called from abroad—and were no more expert than our own—instead of creating original scenarios, and seeking subjects suited to the camera for their films, were content to photograph, more or less painstakingly, the most popular works of the outstanding Portuguese writers. Thus the best romances of Eça de Gueiroz, of Camilo, of Julio Diniz, of Pinheiro Chagar, have been translated to the screen, page for page, flatly, without any cinematic sense . . . nor any sense of art.

Too attached to literature and much influenced by the theatre, the Portuguese cinema, in spite of its brilliant flight during this epoch, yet never succeeded in yielding a work of genuine value . . . artistically mediocre, and feeble in its commercial organisation, it rapidly petered out.



For some years Portugal remained in a state of almost complete inactivity. When suddenly, last year, Rino Lupo presented a super-film, *Fatima Milagrosa*, which immediately became a striking commercial success. In spite of the naïve banality of the scenario, and the somewhat dated technique, the film marked an epoch in the history of the Portuguese cinema, for inspired by its brilliant career in other countries, new forces arose, new hopes were born, and work was begun again, this time with a real enthusiasm and a somewhat unexpected vigor.

A renaissance occurred, then, in the Portuguese cinema, and this year, up to the present time, six productions—some

of which permit us to entertain great hopes for the future—have been presented to the public. *José do Telhado*, *Alfama*, *Lisboa*, *Ver e Amar*, *A Castelã das Berlengas*, and *Maria do Mar*. Almost all these films are the work of young *cinéastes* who, full of courage and faith, have made their *début* in the difficult craft of creating images in movement (and in sound too, now . . .). At their head stands Leitão de Barros, eminent and distinguished writer and painter, who had rapidly created for himself a remarkable position in the Portuguese world of the cinema.

A young artist like Leitão de Barros could not fail to be drawn by this so lively art. With trepidation, he realised a short visual essay, a documentary of a little maritime village, Nazaré, which later was the scene of his chief work *Maria do Mar*, in which he has well succeeded. Enthused by this first success, he travelled to France, to Germany, to Russia, in which countries he studied carefully the new working-methods. On his return to Portugal, he started work on an anecdotal documentary, *Lisboa*. This film affirmed the magnificent qualities which Leitão de Barros had already revealed, yet lacked certain unity. Beside the part of the film which was of a documentary nature, he had set various incidents, or anecdotes—characteristic scenes of Lisbonian life, interpreted by theatre artistes. These fragments were forced and the film suffered much from their inclusion. Nevertheless, the public and the critics were in favour, and Leitão de Barros then undertook, with considerable courage, the direction of a full-length film, *Maria do Mar*, dealing with the life of the fisher-folk of Nazaré.

Inspired strongly by the Soviet method, of which he is a

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great admirer, Leitão de Barros was desirous of making his film in the same manner, infusing into it, at the same time, the characteristic sweetness and romance which is to be found there. The story, a common enough occurrence in the life of the fishers, was not very complicated, but what Leitão de Barros wanted was simply to record in images all the life of these people of the sea, impulsive and primitive, but good as well and courageous.

The part which is, so to speak, documentary, remains the best in the whole film. With a mastery rarely found in Portuguese films, Leitão de Barros has captured in swift images of a rare poignancy and visual beauty, all the joys, and the sufferings of these simple and congenial folk.

The first parts of the film, aided by excellent photography, contain a splendid rhythm which carries us from image to image, each beautifully composed, forming a little sea poem filled with charm and a truly remarkable cinematic orchestration.

Leitão de Barros was already a master of his camera, and if he has stumbled into several errors (some breaks in rhythmic structure, and one or two indifferently successful scenes) that is due rather to lack of experience, and, even more, of good technical equipment, than to any incompetence.

When one thinks that such a film was made with two cameras and only two lamps, one can not but be astounded that its maker has succeeded in creating so charming a cinematographic composition. It is necessary to state that in Portugal there is only one little studio at Oporto, and another, still smaller and more improvised at Lisbon, each equally badly installed with technical equipment, so that the cine-

matists of the country are obliged to turn the greater part of their films in the great studio which is Nature.

Following the Soviet method, Leitão de Barros has resorted for the interpretation of his work, almost entirely to the real fisher-folk and to artists without experience, and without theatrical prejudice. And it was these real fisher-folk who gave the best interpretations, who were most sincere and most admirable. There is in *Maria do Mar* a sequence of close-ups (Leitão de Barros uses many close-ups) of a realism so poignant and a beauty so great, that a master such as Pudovkin would certainly not scorn them.

Unfortunately, Leitão de Barros is not a Pudovkin, and he is not yet master enough of the difficult art of montage. So that several scenes, impeccable in detail, have lost much of their value through being a little too long or a little too short. Nevertheless, this film remains an admirable little visual symphony which would not be dishonoured on no matter what screen in the world. It is a pity that the British, the French, the German, the Russian public has not the opportunity to see it, for everybody, I am convinced, would be enamoured of its picturesque qualities, of its realism, and of the character, the habits, the costume, the life of the fishers of Nazaré, who are certainly the most purely characteristic types existing in Portugal.

Among the other directors who have risen with the Portuguese cinema renaissance, two names stand out: those of João de Sá (*Alfama*) and Antonio Leitã (*A Castelã das Ber-*

A little after the presentation of *Maria do Mar*, the sound film made its noisy appearance in Portugal, alarming the

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young cinema workers, beginning only the difficult mastery *lengas*).

of light and shade. By fits and starts all work was stopped. The reaction of the public to this new form of cinematic presentation was awaited. The public immediately divided into two camps—for and against. The talkies became a great success, without, however, destroying much of the prestige accorded to the silent film.

Work was commenced again with spirit, and for this season we are promised the presentation of many works. *Nua*, which the French *cinéaste*, Maurice Mariand will direct for a new company at Lisbon, *A Dança dos Paroxismos*, which Brun do Canto is now turning, *A Portuguesa de Nápoles*, an historical film directed by Henrique Costa, *A Vida do Soldado*, *Toureiros por Amor*, etc. All these are silent productions.

Contrary to the others, Leitão de Barros, who had not been sitting idle, desired to accompany the cinematographic trend which had seized the world, and without losing time, undertook the preparatory work for his first sound film, *A Severa*, the scenario of which is taken from a celebrated drama of the Portuguese writer Julio Dantas. Before commencing the realisation of this work, Leitão de Barros sought and obtained the collaboration of René Clair for supervision of his work. The scenario organisation has been already accomplished with the valuable help of the talented French director. The exterior photography, turned in the environs of Lisbon, is already far advanced. Leitão de Barros desires to make *A Severa*, of which the action takes place at the end of the nineteenth century, a comprehensive tableau of Portuguese

life of the period, at the same time to invest it with the quality of lore, revealing thus to all Europe the immense and wonderful photographic and photogenic beauties of the country.

And herein lies the resume of Portugal's history of the cinema—cinema which has taken its first step toward world-recognition.

ALVES COSTA.

REELIFE

The pun is as old as the movie. M-G-M with Vidor's *Billy the Kid* presents "Realife" wide-screen projection realized after two years of experimentation. The introduction of this new attraction attests to the fact that the talkie, introduced prematurely as fiscal salvation, has reached its saturation point as an audience-bid. The new type of "grandeur" projection has the advantage of the earlier in that standard-size film print is used, not requiring a special battery of projectors to supplement the standard. The latter is used with a special lens that enlarges the image to the size desired. The picture is made on special-size stock and reduced to standard. The image is not blurred, and the grain of the *pellicule* is eliminated. The grain that is revealed is that of the image, notably in the case of landscape, which

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benefits most from the new invention, gaining definiteness of edge (a tactile conquest), contour and spatial relations: depth, contrast of hollow and ridge, placement values, etc.

The earlier wide screen was wider but not higher than the standard. "Realife" enlarges the total perimeter. The screen will be adjusted to the particular theatre, and the lens image will be enlarged "much as a commercial artist enlarges a photograph". Flexibility of screen is decidedly a victory! But will literalness not thwart its potentialities? An adjustable screen suggests multiple uses, a screen changing in dimensions, an active screen.

Vidor sees the change in screen as solely a visual change, having nothing to do with the audible. But any visual change in the compound cinema is an audible change. If there is pictorial relief—as the distant approximation of the stereoscopic achieves in "Realife"—there is also, inherently, sound-relief; pictorial perspective, sound perspective; pictorial variety (in the intrinsic), sonal variety. Vidor the chronologist has never used sound and speech with the zeal of a discoverer or even a scrupulous student. Literalist he is, but not artist. He sees the new device as doing "away with a good many of the 'cut-backs' and close-ups to which we have been accustomed". The literal mind confesses: the devices of 'cut-back' and close-up to him were not rhythmic compositional utilities, but merely expediences! Expediences to satisfy the momentarily effective. *Billy the Kid* possesses a few ingratiating moments and nothing more. "Action on the screen can be told in more direct, flowing style". This means, as illustrated by *Billy the Kid*, nothing other than the rudimentary 1, 2, 3, yarn-spinning structure

of the western, initial in Broncho Billy of two decades ago. But to allow Mr. Vidor his own defense, I quote him :

“ For example, in one sequence of *Billy the Kid* we have a hold-up scene in the foreground of the picture. By means of the depth illusion . . . a rescue party is seen starting, in the background, several miles away. The oncoming party does not know what is happening in front, but the audience observes every moment of both with more suspense than could be possible by any system of ‘ cut-backs ’.”

The simultaneity achieved does not destroy the function of the “ cut-back ”, for the latter is not merely a narrative or suspense expedient, but as the Russians have indicated, a part of a process—psychological, physiological, dramatic, pivotal (as in *Fragment of an Empire*), rhythmic.

The major victories of “ Realife ” are photographic and the selection of details from a mass. The victories are not so sure with the human players as with the natural setting, and it was therefore wise to begin with *Billy the Kid*. The screen is less apparently framed (perhaps this is because the new screen is a novelty, though its not being square helps too), and it is freer in its receptivity to masses and movements and the participation of background with fore-players—although Vidor has barely hinted at these in his film. Movement backward into the depth is more convincing, not merely because it is more “ natural ”—as Vidor puts it—but because there is a sense of placement, of changing relationship between the thing or person in motion and environment. In other words, focus is rendered more elastic too. Vidor comments also upon the “ sideways ” sight of “ Realife ”. The façade and thickness of an erect structure are visible, and distances are

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more definitely established in ratio. But we are still very, very far away from the stereoscopic film!

And what do all these inventions avail finally, if there is no intelligence to use them, and if, above all, the point of view toward the theme remains as uninformed as ever? *Billy the Kid* is just another western of "the good bad man" who goes good for the girl, a theme and a treatment which date from the first *Broncho Billy*. About a half-dozen years ago *The Covered Wagon* was filmed to ludicrous applause. I don't think many besides James Stevens and myself rejected it or questioned its being a work of importance. It was another—if longer—*Broncho Billy*. Fred Thomson gave us *Jesse James*, one of the few westerns to appear on Broadway before the talkie. This was a mixture of Tom Mix and Doug. Fairbanks. Neither the legend nor the historical period found expression in the film. And *Billy the Kid* is another stereotype.

Billy the Kid was an emotional moron who played in the frontier era of economic warfare the rôle of the gun-ready racketeer. Legends never develop around him of the Robin Hood and Jesse James "he did it for the poor" brand. He shot twenty-odd men "not counting Mexicans and Indians," and omitting, I suppose, the ranch foreman who was "only a Jew." Billy the Kid is the high-water mark of the economic desperado unrefined. In the more refined sphere he has numerous counterparts in contemporary society.

The Governor of Billy's state absolves William's misdemeanors as resulting from a "keen sense of justice", and undersigns the Vidor film as authentic despite aesthetically warranted "liberties" with the truth. It is humorous to

watch these blunt boys suddenly turn to art for argument. The deliberate degrading of Melville's "Moby Dick" into *The Sea Beast* was defended as artistic expedience. The law and order which came into the wild and woolly west was brought there to paternalize the "organised" rustlers of the new variety, the "land-rustlers". Vidor's film makes the paternalism of the White House a father's wish for peace in the family. And Billy goes off with the girl—reformed. Actually, he was shot dead in his tracks. Might it not have been because he would not give up his "sphere of influence", when the big racketeers came west with the sanction of the government? In *The Spoilers*, the Rex Beach novel recently paramounded with speech (Selig made a silent of it years ago), the identical relationship enters, but is never stressed for what it means: the government backing the big racketeer against the small man. In our land of opportunity, the big racketeer always gets his chance; land-grabs, mine-grabs, Teapot Dome. That's the simple story of *Billy the Kid*, a "saga" that can't be told in the movie. Especially since the west is building a monument to Billy, murderer and emblem, and tourists are wanted.

* * *

Critics, in a confused attack upon the talkie, in its first days complained that no outdoor films were being made. The manufacturers were taking full advantage of their fiscal salvation, making films within three set-up walls of old sets and old scenarios, without sonal inventiveness—small investment, huge profits from a curious public. But it was inevitable that the outdoor films should return, and they returned with a

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semblance of suavity bestowed by speech and the consequent reduction in action-pitch'. In *Old Arizona* . . . *The Virginian* . . . all of Zane Grey over again . . . *Billy the Kid* . . . and an oncoming avalanche of wide-screen westerns. With a new prestige : westerns able to draw crowds on Broadway! Roadshow westerns, not destined merely for the dilapidated houses of the slums or the hinterland. . . And has there been any victory of sound in the open spaces accounted for? No! Reelife remains as unilluminated as ever—talk is talk and cheap at that.

I have long thought the little cinemas and film clubs should have developed the short-subject programme. There have been a few, like the Film Club's American comedy programme at Studio 28. But at this moment, with the sound film demanding more research into its nature, the short-subject film can serve as an experimental base. Audiences will tolerate such experiments as "novelties". Instead of the "arty" films such as the United Artists' *Featurettes*, produced by "Doctor" Hugo Riësenfeld and William Cameron Menzies, which depend for their appeal on the public's general ignorance of the antiquity and derivation of the devices employed, expressionistic light-designs and Meliès virtuosity, fundamental studies in optophonic composition could be made. Also, serious narrative materials could be exploited, a story such as Hardy's *Three Strangers*, so suited to the sound-film. Instead of musical films like the Riësenfeld-Menzies, which try to do a Mickey Mouse and give us fake art. Take the film in which the action is descriptive and follows the music of *Hungarian Rhapsody*. There is a difference between the movement-of-a-film to music and the

action of the performers "interpreting" the music. For instance, when the music blares victoriously, the climax is expressed by the actor throwing his hat into the air. Literal interpretation. The integration of film-and-music depends on montage and not on the action of the player.

* * *

The short-subject programme could draw upon the ethnographic romance, such as *Nanook* and *Moana*, the lyricized document; upon the sensitive nature study, such as the films of Jean Painlevé (his octopus picture has been called here, upon my suggestion, *The Passion and Death of the Octopus*); absolute pictures like Deslaw's *The Electric Night*; rather than those simpering maudlin stories describing *The Elegy* (which was an innovation several years ago because it went back to the captionless film). . . But I look forward to the development of the short-subject film out of the innocuous vaudefilm act as an extension and penetration of the art of the compound cinema. Alexandroff has made a first step.

H. A. POTAMKIN.

AND THUS IT GOES ON

We weep because the experimental cinema "as we once knew it" seems to be dying, let us therefore search for present experiments of a new nature.

Berlin is acclaiming a new series of short sound-films entitled *Tanzende Linien*, which emanate from the Oskar Fischinger Tontrick-Film-Atelier.

The films are designed to accompany ready-made dance records. Little white lines swing, bend, dance. The gaiety is appreciated outside the realms of the limited abstract-film audience. From Fischinger we learn :

"The films progress continuously in an equal rhythm, and this neutralising effect corresponds to psychological moments, characterised in the extreme by the word "trance." The rhythmic, amorphous, oscillating style is effected by "black-white" technique. As soon as we commence working in colour, the scenery will be dynamic and concrete. It will then be possible to combine objects of the plastic sphere with motives of the organic, dramatic and dancing sphere." With the deterioration of Mickey and Oswald, Oskar Fischinger's play with lines arrives to take their place.

From Paris, experiments in new-form cinema marionettes. Wow (pronounced Vof) and Zitch are the names adopted by

a Russian and a Lithuanian who have had long experience with marionettes. The films are made entirely unaided, from the complete fabrication of the dolls and scenery to the manipulation, lighting and photography.

The first film to be made independently was *Tango des Chats*, a feline eternal triangle drama upon Paris roof-tops. Designed as a sound-film, *Tango des Chats* contains many dances. The moon laughs and careers in multiple exposure, chimneys grin and sway, mice organise a jazz-band, a human throws a slipper at the mice who immediately enter and utilise it as a means of locomotion. Most startling is the Eiffel Tower (a perfect replica) which like the others cannot resist the rhythm and joins in the dance. *Tango des Chats* is a happy essay in the animation of the normally inanimate.

Wow and Zitch are completing *Max and the Fly*, the adventures between a mouse and a fly upon a table fully laden for dinner. Influenced by the original success of the animated drawings Mickey the Mouse, Wow and Zitch have revolutionised marionette technique in a highly successful endeavour to produce a similar effect in three dimensions. Max's arms and legs can become elongated or diminished, his whole body can assume any desired size. Tiny Max next to a huge champagne glass desires to drink—zip, in a moment he has grown and can bend over the glass. Max diminishes to nothing to enter a hole in a cheese and automatically assumes his normal size as he makes his exit. Max chases the fly but the latter suddenly assumes gigantic proportions and pursues Max in turn. A pheasant, a ham and a loaf of bread come to his assistance; Max loses his legs and on retrieving them loses his arms, while during all these

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adventures the corks of the bottles, in the form of little old men and women, gossip and laugh, and the apples and pears register appropriate surprise. One astonishing scene shows Max diminishing to enter a bottle of fizz and eventually coming out with a spray of sparkling bubbles. The technical difficulties here will hardly be appreciated, for the bubbles are neither drawn nor are they real, but are synthetic bubbles skilfully manufactured from metal.

I know of no cinema marionettes developed to such a fine degree, and if the morsels which I have been privileged to see are carefully edited and well exploited they should prove a startling innovation.

A previous film by Wow and Zitch, not made with marionettes, is entitled *Névrose*. It is a psychological study of a man's discovery that everything in this world is made for woman. I have not yet had the occasion to see the film, but its still photographs promise pleasing groups and extraordinary trick photography.

Walter Ruttmann, always an experimentalist, has produced film without images, which he refers to as a "horspiel." It is a development of his experiments in *Melodie der Welt* and should be considered rather as a demonstration of how sound upon film can be cut and mounted than as a work complete in itself. This acoustic play—for it cannot in reality be called a film—is entitled *Week End* and has captured the sounds from the close of a working-day to the commencement of the holiday. It is a pioneering effort at mounting sound and of further reaching effect than *Romance Sentimentale* by Eisenstein and Alexandroff.

I learnt from Dovjenko that Vertof is applying his Kino-

Eye theories to a sound film of a working district entitled *Symphonie von Dornbass*. (Dornbass is a part of Russia corresponding to the German Ruhr territory.)

While discussing experimental work I would like to refer again to the Belgian cinéaste Charles Dekeukeleire, who remains the most independent of all the experimentalists.

In the June 1930 *Close Up* (page 515), I criticized his last film *Histoire de Détective* with perhaps too much levity, and I wish to take the opportunity of saying that at the time owing to a misunderstanding I had seen only extracts of the film though under the impression that I was seeing the complete film. Soon after this presentation, the film was shown in its complete state and Dekeukeleire as well as the poet Paul Werrie, Dekeukeleire's assistant, discussed his methods. (These speeches have been published in the Belgian art journal *Le Rouge et le Noir*.)

Knowing how many people are interested in Dekeukeleire's films, I feel that it is not out of place here to quote from *Le Rouge et le Noir* some of Dekeukeleire's most important theories :

Bref, que ce qui nous émeut dans un film, est moins sa vraie tenue intérieure que la nouveauté, l'étonnement

Voici quelques indications sur les voies que j'ai suivies dans *Histoire de Détective*.

D'abord je me suis préoccupé de ce que j'appellerais, la *décomposition du regard*. Jusqu'à présent, la base de l'expression cinématographique était le cadre ou si vous voulez, le tableau. Le cadre est une chose artificielle que tous les panoramiques—ou vues promenées—du monde, tels qu'ils sont employés aujourd'hui n'arriveront pas à corriger

Nous travaillons en essayant pour la première fois au cinématographe, d'introduire la notion du film de durée

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And Paul Werrie adds some interesting figures. The first film *Combat de Boxe*, 170 metres, made in 1927, cost 3,000 French francs. Two professional boxers fight upon a canvas made up of two bed covers. The whole ring is only a design measuring 50 square centimetres. The crowd consisted of half-a-dozen friends and the producer's family, who stood on a tier, and left the line to take their place again at the other end, meanwhile changing their hat or attitude.

Impatience, 800 metres, made in 1928-1929, cost 8,000 francs. A portable camera with three lenses, and lighting composed of four 1000 candle-power lamps were used.

Histoire de Détective, 1,350 metres, 28,000 francs. Persons who had not acted upon stage or screen were enlisted, and obeyed commands without ever knowing what significance their actions would have in the finished film. One final point: the negative film was developed in a corner of their cellar.

Thus experimental cinema continues all over Europe. A form of cinema often neglected and even remaining unknown to many who would be interested to view the fruits of serious research.

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

THE FUNNY SIDE OF THE SCREEN

The biggest electric sign in the world is at present blazing on the London Pavilion. . .

Sometimes, looking through the contents of a new *Close Up*, I find at the bottom that I am a London Correspondent. And that seems a funny thing to be. It suddenly occurs to me I ought to get hold of "stories," send cabled rumours

about the fate of the Astoria chain, argue about the C.E.A. . . . for all that is happening in London, and yet it touches cinema, as we know it, not at all. That is why I feel funny, sometimes, at being London correspondent; because cinema is not a thing you can tie down to any one place or to any one man or any one film. Not even *Turksib*. For cinema existed in one's mind long before movies, and the perfect film, even when one sees it, is not a surprise but a recognition. Even *Turksib* one had seen in one's mind before it ever was made . . . though not in those terms. Cinema is a state of mind quite independent of films; that is why it is possible to go on. That is why it seems funny, but doesn't affect anything at all, to begin, as a London correspondent, "The biggest electric sign in the world is at present blazing on the London Pavilion."

Which means we have got *Hell's Angels* at last.

And we have got *Cosmos* at last. It has been cut and amended and synchronised and given the name of *The Mystery of Life*.

And there is Conrad Veidt in a good film, *The Last Company*, sombre and strong and sensitive, even if it doesn't interest you.

There are Von Stroheim, Keaton, Chevalier, Laurel and Hardy to be seen. There is a good tough British talkie in *The Man from Chicago*. The German film of the Antarctic, *Roah Roah*, made by Dr. Kohl Larsen, has arrived, to the length of not quite four thousand feet, and been given an American commentary and called *The Bottom of the World*. It has some of the best studies of sea-leopards, sea-elephants, albatross and every breed of penguin there has been in film,

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because they really are studies. It is a "grosstier film." The human people are kept in the background; there is no falsified story of a heroic expedition, and one really learns something about these very worth-learning-about animals. If penguin-interest is so stimulated, there is a new Kearton picture entirely about them. I mean, there is plenty to see. The London Workers' Film Society showed Room's *The Ghost that Never Returns*, and Atlas are busy with Russian films of all kinds. There is plenty to see in London. The New Victoria has *The Big House*. There is plenty to see . . . but where will you get when you've seen it? Just where, and what is the point, perhaps, of seeing it?

There is *Hell's Angels*. Very beautiful air shots, teeming with planes and glowing with clouds. Did you know what clouds looked like when you are so far above them yourself that they look like the earth, they seem so solid and so assuring? Well, that is something. Very beautiful clouds, twirling like seaweed in whipped cream. Fantastic, anenome-like, very soft and peaceful and solid. Then planes dashing through them. The screen expanding as fifty planes or it may be more, I've mislaid my publicity book, engage in battle. That too is something. Now we know, you say. The prime point of *Hell's Angels* is the skill of the pilots. But is it a pilot's film? Does it set out to do for pilots what *Turksib* (bless Huntly Carter for discovering it!) did for a railway? No. Mr. Hughes was actuated by a more humble ambition—to make the greatest screen play of all time (speaking pre-Einstein, of course). So he wanted these scenes to blow out his story and it is a story so low, so less than ape-brow, so pathologically puerile that even the London first-night

audience laughed and would have none of it. Imagine that, the screen's latest most blinding blonde laughed at in her love-stuff! And the heroes were two Americans who had the newest kind of shaker at Oxford before the war and when they were in the Flying Force by some miraculous dispensation were allowed to wear their hair becomingly long. And there is a young German who very disgustingly gives wrong orders when the Zeppelin is bombing London so that they fall in the Thames, because he had been happy in London, and there is the usual story of the man who goes up in a captured German plane, which isn't recognised, and the whole affair is a twisted homosexual affair of brother-love.

But the air shots are wonderful.

And never once do you cease to feel how clever the camera is being. Never once do you feel "in" it. All the time you know where the camera was, and how clever it was to be there. With all the stuff, the fights aren't exciting enough and are often confusing because the cutting is childish, with no drive, no intelligence, no mind back of it.

But the air shots are wonderful.

And *The Dawn Patrol* is a better picture, though it's cheaper and hasn't a sky-sign.

Then, *The Mystery of Life* is good as far as it goes. But it doesn't go far. The Censor, you say. Well, damn the censor. We knew all this before. This film is the equivalent of the biological books in the two and six *To-day and Tomorrow* series. Can't the film do better than that? Don't tell me they cut it, don't tell me what difficulties UFA were up against. Don't tell me it is something to go on with. Every film is.

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Every film is, and nearly every film has existed in our minds before we have ever seen it. We want to go further. The cinema isn't a thing in itself. It's an aid to reach where we want to. To do that we have to purge ourselves by expression and prepare ourselves by expression. *Cinema* has the power to do this better than anything else. It is directer and more delicate; we can bend it this way and that; we can organise buildings and rocks, we can probe right through our minds; we can do more than we know how to. But this doesn't mean that *the* cinema has any importance. It is merely that we have it, to do with what should be important—and we don't. It is the subtlest medium we have. But we haven't really got it, because it's a business, it's run for entertainment and we only find in it what is in our minds—we find cinema in films, because our minds have cinema in them. In books and all else we have tried to find and put cinema and haven't. Cinema remains but not *the* cinema. That is an affair of shall we have colour or wide screen, why not have both?; atmospheric theatres and studio-atmospheric films; stage shows which last longer than films and films that are serious cut down so that there is room in a programme for another film to negate their effect. *The* cinema has mighty Würlitzers, rich curtains, fake flowers and the biggest electric sign in the world. *The* cinema goes on doing this, thinking a bigger screen or a bigger theatre, more colour in the theatre or more colour in the film, is all that counts and that it will go on for ever, just like that. As H. Carter says (having made the mistake of finding all cinema in *Turksib*) *the* cinema, after all this time, shows no advance, "only a falling curve checked here and there by mechanical innovations." And that's true.

It's almost worth another of these long books on THE cinema to have that and his remark about Russian directors visiting foreign countries on the strength of ideas they no longer have need for (for when have you ever heard a Russian director say anything new and un-elementary in your life?)

And having this need and this way of feeling and thinking, this urge to get through all that clutters us, using it at the same time as symbols, all of which we call cinema . . . having this, which we have put in the cinema, we can put it anywhere else. I mean, we are likely to find more cinema in television for instance. There it is, after all. Picture and sound. Just like talkie, only actual image, not photographed image. The sound is radio. Well, consider the radio. In England, it is non-commercial. It does not, yet, let out the air to Kolynos and Macfisheries. But it does run orchestras and ensure operas and perform plays more serious than we have on the stage . . . it has the courage to perform plays that have not for their chief recommendation box-office appeal, just as it performs music that is not primarily popular (as well as giving *plenty* of E. German and De Groot, God knows). Its talks are on the whole less childish, when it deals with evolution, than the films we are allowed to see. I mean, there is more chance there. Because it is less lop-sided. There is allowed to be room for most things on the air.

In the five years which everyone gives television before it will be where radio is to-day, may not the same thing be true? When we have good-sized pictures which we can hear being broadcast all day, from several stations, allowing choice mayn't we find there is more to be done there than in THE cinema, the London correspondence of which is typified in

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the announcement that *The Big House* must be seen because it is the first time that real machine guns were used successfully for machine gun noises? If television, which is now at the start, can keep as relatively free and comparatively courageous as radio, the cinema's going to have an awfully difficult time. Because what we put into it won't be there. I already find I am getting more and seeing more out of a three-quarter-postcard-size image of the heads and shoulders of a not-first rate artist singing rather poor songs (usually film hits) in my televisior each morning than I do, say, from *Hell's Angels*, *Check and Double Check*, *Common Clay*, and so on. There seems more point in tuning in a televisior, in view of what they already do with such amazingly limited means, than in going out to one particular talkie which will be so well-made (though' not in the main so well-photographed lately), so slick, so amusing, so like all the others that you get nothing at all of cinema. You can only wait for the real film to come, and even *Turksib* isn't the end. It isn't a "call to live men to search for a new type of picture", because that call has been made vainly for years before Mr. Carter ever saw *Turksib*. We hail *Turksib* because we recognise it; we hail television because we recognise in it what the cinema will not do. . . .

London correspondence ends with *The Silver Horde*, remarkable for using the new beam microphone. The stars are Evelyn Brent and a salmon.

ROBERT HERRING.

IT HAPPENED IN BRUXELLES . . .

"I am going to Bruxelles," I repeated to myself after reading in the *Daily Express* that the Scheldt had risen ten feet in an hour, "to see films. I must forget what the sea looked like when I stepped off the quay at Dover. I must forget that I had tea in a mental café at Ostende; blinds half drawn and light at a halt, neither coming or going. In other words I must not for a moment think that I am writing *Star Dust in Hollywood*."

Yet Bruxelles seemed a film city when my taxi took me to the hotel. (The driver driving with one hand and winding up the meter with the other. Later, I decided that he must be the comic relief and gave him a tip.) As a stranger I was amazed at the frozen close ups, the busts of holy men. Moreover, my guide book, on consultation, drew, like a patient schoolmaster, my attention to whole frozen long shots: *Slave Attacked by Dogs* by Semain.

I-am-going-to-Bruxelles-to-see-films.

I obtained *Le Soir*. The cinemas were "passing" *Le Spectre Vert* (French talkie made in Hollywood), *Troika*, *Nuit d'angoisse* and *The Blue Express* (at the avant-garde cinema in the Palais des Beaux-Arts which has been open two years and reports grand success with *Chien Andalou* and

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Accident.) I-am-going-to-see-films : therefore, I selected the furthest to go—a Slovakian film by the young director of *Erotikon*, *La Jungle d'une Grande Ville*. Most of the imagination had been lavished on the title. Still, the close ups were so immense that they had the quality of sculpture by a famous English artist who appears to use a bicycle pump. They left nothing to suggestion : all that you could want to know was in the pictures. At that size the lips and eyes had every meaning stated that could be given them by overtones. Never, except in *Erotikon*, have I seen such enormous close ups. Also, the picture had a technical innovation : close ups were, sometimes, superimposed over long shots.

The next morning I consulted Henri Storck.

“Of course,” he said crossly, “we have a cinema. What of the ‘actualities’? It is only in the news reels that you will have a chance to hear Wallon or Flemish. I make my living by taking topicals in Ostende. Some of them are being strung together and will be presented at the Congress. They will show you our folk lore (processions, archery, and so on).”

The cinema a part, an organic part, of social life. Page Mr. Huntly Carter!

“I am interested, too,” continued Storck, “in the experimental film. But, you understand, this is my first year of cinema : before that I was in my mother’s shop. I was keen. I made an animated cartoon without a camera, painting directly onto the film. I have started several abstracts. Now, I would rather not show them. Wait till I have had more experience.”

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Images d'Ostende, the modest director admitted, had enjoyed some success. Only, he thinks, because it is a souvenir of his childhood: a record of the walks he took as a child.

"I wanted to show the friendship and life in dead objects; the wind rocking the chair, the sea moving the sand. Do you think that will be realised by the cinéastes at the Congress?"

"If," I replied, "you have been able to put life into dead objects—during those sentimental walks of childhood—I feel certain you can put life into dead celluloid."

An English trade paper had reported that the Belgian Nord-Film will shortly produce *Le Carillon de la Liberté*. I asked Storck whether he would work for them. He shrugged his shoulders. He would like studio experience. There was a magnificent studio outside of Bruxelles. No film had ever been turned there. The Nord Film had not yet begun. He shrugged his shoulders. Dekeukeleire cuts in a tiny room and works with a hand camera. He, Storck, would next make an advertising short for an auto firm in exchange for a car. As for the story film. . .

I returned to my *Le Soir*. I cast a guilty eye to see whether there was an exhibition of "Edible Mushrooms and Poisonous Fungi", a Belgian festival which, my guide book assures me, must never be missed. (I trust my guide book. It is capable of sheer magnificence. It bursts into modern art criticism about Wiertz: "The interest he still evokes lies as much in his pathology as in his pigments and it is best that one should simply regard him as a baroque pearl in the regalia of the world's art.") Of course I-am-going-to-Bruxelles-to-see-films.

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The Blue Express, then, at the avant-garde cinema. They play records of Poulenc and Stravinsky. Avant-garde cinema. Avant-garde cinema in Bruxelles. Ilia Trauberg's film runs on greased rails. The cutting slicks up the story about the Chinese Express. Non-representational sections give further speed. . . They say that the manager of the Palais des Beaux-Arts also has shares in the Chinese railways. He came to the Studio to see the film. The operator had to edit the copy as it was literally running through the machines. For these Russian films are a little too pro-Boer (if one may skip a generation). Why should an outcast family walk slowly along the railway lines just to offer contrast with the dame with false teeth sleeping in the luxury express? All these contrasts and symbols come to the mind at once and the mind rejects them because they are too facile—or ought to reject them. On the other hand the programme included *Vive Dimanche* by Robert Siadmak acted by real-life men and women. (You know. They gave that exhibition of life masks in London when our make-up, solidified at the end of the day, would have been truer. I mean we all wear masks, don't we?) They are charming types which rather gives the game away: not anyone from life but selection. How coy, though, the film is, in spite of marvellous photography. Half the footage is taken up by a girl allowing a man to chase her through the woods!

And what now? Having seen the cinemas and Störck and actualities, wait for the Congress? Or be a snapped-up journalist and discover Buyse?

Buyse says, "Story films in Belgium? Take your coat and hat and I will show you one in the making."

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Down little streets (pardon me, Mr. Buyse) down sinister little streets. Through the grimed door of a too-Hollywood-underworld café. AND . . . Berna, one of Eisenstein's operators on *The General Line*, making a film in a backroom. It is the Praesens Film Company from Zurich working with Belgian artistes. The Praesens Film Company sponsored *L'Appel de la Vie*, the film of Tissé which was banned. Turned (one recalls) in the Swiss maternity home. Somehow, the Praesens Company seems brave and independent. (Brave—after the backroom.)

Is it not that half the world does not know how the other half of Bruxelles lives?

I had found (past tense, present tense, future tense: the patchwork of continental organisation) a company in production. The cinéastes had not known of it!

Monsieur Lucien François, one of the actors, offers information to the PRESS. The name of the film is *La Fosse Ardente*. Directed by Rigo Arnould (who addresses me from the distance in perfect English). There is a big mine explosion in the film. It will be, indeed, a super. A month to turn.

They are all so nice (the Praesens Company and the Belgian artistes). Buyse makes pleasant jokes about the conditions. Soon, he will have a similar studio. He will turn *Gold*: the story of a chemist who discovers the alchemist's secret. His son will be cameraman. What, I did not know that he had already made two films himself? He beams. He has been so busy telling me of the films of his friends. A document on Bruges and *Depths of the Sea*, a full length drama. Just Maes, of the Royal Flemish Theatre,

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was star of the *Depths*. Exteriors were shot at St. Marguerite, the same location as the Praesens Company is using for the EXPLOSION (SUPER FILM)!

We drank, Buyse and I, coffee in the Hollywood café. We treated the violinist to a coffee. He played twice as fast because he could not play twice as well.

I liked Buyse. I wished him success. I have only seen a fragment of his film on what was once a piece of blotting paper.

Past tense, present tense, future tense. I must rest in my room. Think out some cold theory. Or read the guide book.

The Belgians have a sweet habit. They pull down their public buildings and rebuild them when the next man comes into power. It is a nice gesture. . . A knock on the door. "The guide book slips from my nerveless fingers." Dekeukeleire, with his latest film, *The White Flame* and a hand projector. Naturally, I am delighted. The director of *Impatience* and *The Boxing Match* would show me his latest film written by Rombaats who is a critic on a Flemish paper. Enchanted, monsieur. . . A political meeting. A young man hits a gendarme. He flies to his home. He sees ice, sees more clearly. He realises that the revolution is in himself. He rubs his face against the hide of a cow (contact with the earthy things and creatures). He allows himself to be arrested.

Dekeukeleire puts on the third reel of the *Histoire du Détective*. An apple ballet. Done by cutting. Movements of the ballerina and the chorus boys. . . Some of it

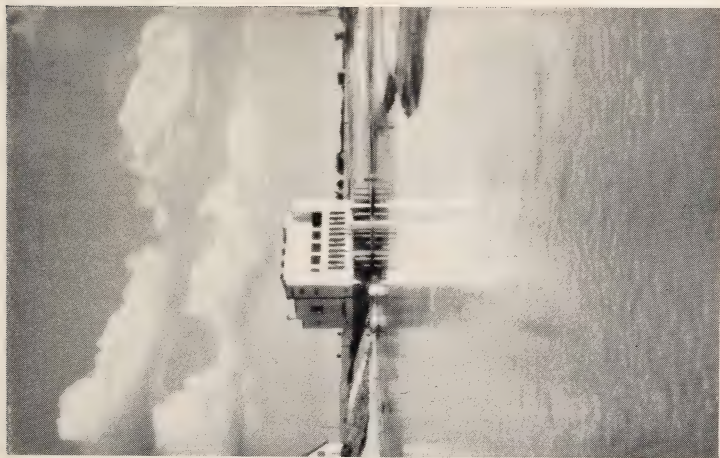
is transitional, some of it (the apple ballet) remains a thing accomplished.

He tells me—this clever Belgian director—that he is working on a new Socialist film. Snapshots of workers WORKING.

A new edition of *Le Soir*.

They have published a lot about the Congress but the actual day of showing for each film is not yet fixed. To represent Russia they will screen *The Man with a Movie Camera* and *Earth*. So the day of the Russian film really must be over. The new pictures . . . some of them one has seen in London. *Pamir* that showed one things. (Making a film about a mountain when the higher up a mountain one goes the less there is to see.) *Pamir*, with its dead black photography, which often did not show one things. (*Hot by day and cold by night*, said a title which was followed by a shot of man in furs kneeling next to a man in a bathing suit. I mean was it day or night?) *Human Arsenal* with its Mary Pickford furniture for the governor to sit in, with its puckish hero who spoke to the cuckoo clock. (How could a man who had been ten years in prison keep so well in touch with the political position that his presence was necessary to start the strike?)

France and Germany will have abstracts (Chomette's *Cinq Minutes de Cinéma Pur*, Gorel's *Bateaux Parisiens*, Richter's *Jeux de Chapeaux*) and England *Borderline*. This is interesting for *Borderline* is suggestion. What can abstract shapes suggest but further shapes till all the world spins round one? *Borderline* builds in you. It is not even as simple as the



From the latest work of Joris Ivens, *New Ground*. Especially felicitous is the still on the left, in which the modern outline of the first building on the New Ground, rises almost out of the sea water.

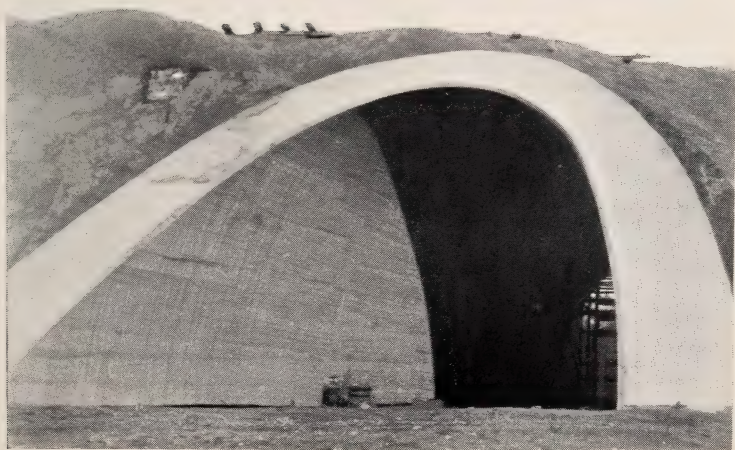


From *New Ground*, a new picture of the reclamation of Dutch soil from the sea, by Joris Ivens.





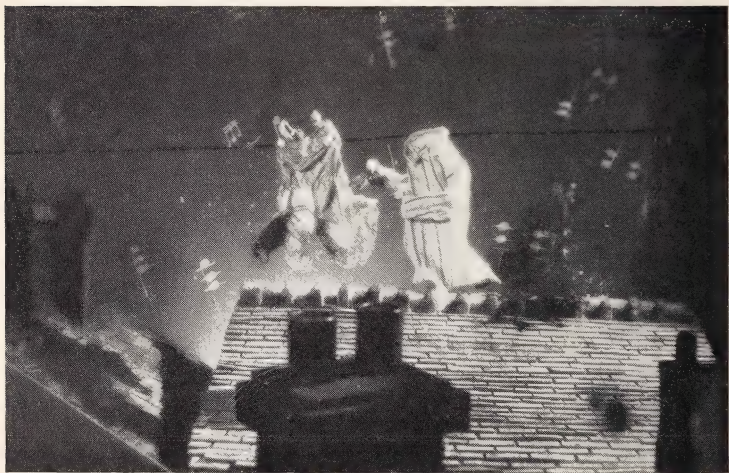
From *New Ground*, by Joris Ivens. Mud split in the process of drying.



From *Railroad-Building in South Limburg*, a film by Joris Ivens.



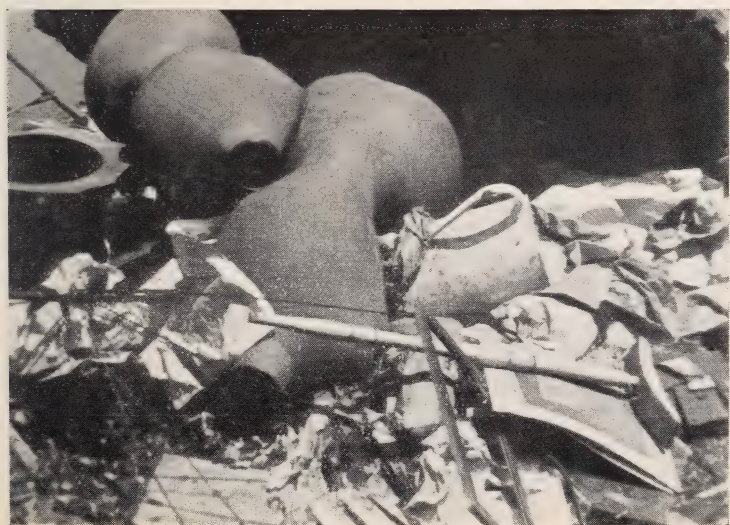
Marionettes now enjoy the cosmic flexibility of *Mickey*, *Flip the Frog* and *The Silly Symphonies*. From *Tango des Chats* (*Cats' Tango*), a film written and directed by Wow and Zitch (see article in this issue), *And Thus It Goes On*. Note that in the background the Eiffel Tower is dancing.



A spirited dance of the clothes on the clothes-line from *Tango des Chats*, by Wow and Zitch.

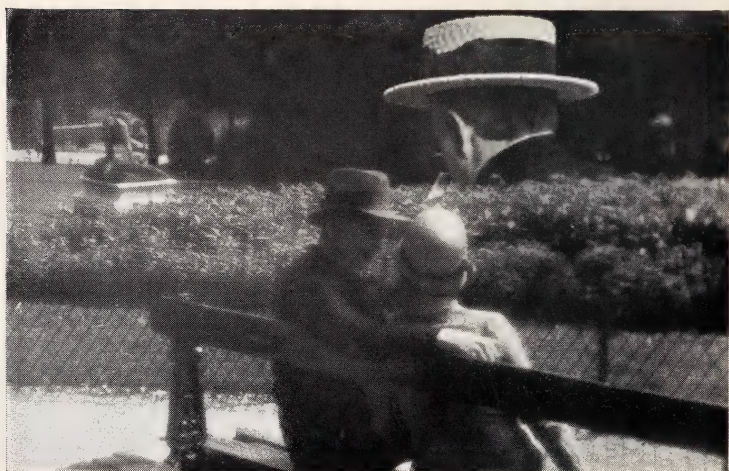


From *Vers Les Robots*, by Eugen Deslaw, see article in this issue.





Nèvrose, another film by Wow and Zitch. This is the final image. The man has realised the world is made for Woman, and everything must bow before her. Accepting this fact, as he stands before the unmasked statue in the Jardin des Tuileries, he becomes aesthete again.



Nèvrose. The man during his walks, is continually haunted by the sight of happy lovers. Manuscript and direction : Wow and Zitch.



The man, caught and tormented by his neurosis. From *Nèvrose*, by Wow and Zitch.



To Your Beautiful Eyes. From the film by Henri Storck. Exclusive.



Max and the Mouse. Another Wow and Zitch film. Max, the mouse, with suddenly elongated legs, shoots at the fly with a rifle extracted from a tooth-pick paper.



The fly becomes abnormally enlarged. Max mounts the porcelain cat, seen in picture, and chases it.

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picture on the emotional plane which makes you take a part in the drama.

And this afternoon I will see the first *Présentation de films*.

FRIDAY (afternoon). In the Palais des Beaux-Arts there is a marvellous exhibition of Negro Art. The carvings and sculpture pieces are given plenty of room to state their cases against plain walls. One can revolve slowly round "the plastic." Surely it is a pity that a little of the same care could not have been devoted to the presentation of the films. The executive of the Congress had no trailers to say, "We Present . . ." and "End." The leader on a short from Paris was actually projected: it was an advertisement for an old programme at the Ursulines. An advanced *bande* was projected so that titles by Robert Desnos read from right to left. (Something that Mr. Desnos had not thought of first). And *Borderline* was slipped into the first programme without warning.

The first film was a Painlevé document of underwater subjects. "Novelties" blown out at a carnival. Insufficient magnification; half the screen was left without motion.

A Spanish short, *The Poem of Madrid*. Ramon Gomez poses as an Aunt Sally. There are close ups of pictures by Picasso and Picabia. The camera on a roundabout. The Virgin superimposed with doves. Puppets that turn round and round. A bull fight; fan with a long shot painted on one side and a close up on the other. . . These things are five finger exercises like still life groups. One loses nothing if one gets nothing from viewing these Deslaw-in-Spanish scenes.

too easy. One must MAKE. Take the case of Deslaw's new *Robots*. The material is the same as that of every one else who can be called "A Man with a Hand Movie Camera in his Pocket." If Deslaw had been in Bruxelles one knows that he would have dashed off to secure extra shots of Manneken-Pis to insert in his *Robots*. One knows the shop windows, the men with road drills.

NEWS ENTRACTE. Three people talk in German about showing a talkie tomorrow morning in Spanish to a Flemish audience. . . Germain Dulac has gone back to Paris. Joris Ivens has arrived. He is making a new film for a large electrical firm in Holland. He has not brought *Rain*. He suggests that, next year, the Congress be held in Amsterdam.

COMMISSIONS AND GENERAL MEETINGS. A plan on paper to fédérate all Independent Producers, to have a news reel of independence. A plan on paper for judicial censorship. (Cries of, "Are advocats more broadminded than policemen?") A plan on paper to produce a film for which the Congress has raised the sum of £160 (it sounds better in francs): competition for the scenarios (entries to be sent in before April 1, 1931, to the judges at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Bruxelles).

The plans on paper are read so that they are "in the air"!

DISCOVERY. A new *Le Soir* with changes of programme. Baranovskaia in *Tonischka* directed by Karel Anton. All the treatment of wheels and steam whistles for a miniature railway which brings the girl back to her village.

Anton has a sense of humour.

The girl has brought back presents for the mother. She lays them—musical-box, cake dish, shawl—on the table and

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hides. The mother tries to find her and, when she does discover her daughter, sits down on a chair instead of running, covered by moving Hollywood lenses, towards her. She puts a hand over her mouth to check the cries she feels are unrefined when her daughter slips the shawl over her shoulders.

The sweetheart comes to look for his old friend. For an instant the girl's face expresses horror when he tries to kiss her.

Windmills, farmyard walls, flute and mouth organ duets. All that is old to me; but it is old to the girl in the film, too. She shows that. So one waits.

"And the girl," you may say, "have you not already spoken of prostitutes as screen material?" I admit it looks bad. The feather tippet. (Will she come down the stairs of the pub, smoke filled, with her hands on her hips? Camera looking up, à la Pola). . . I would not be writing this without justification: it comes when. . .

The police call at the brothel. A condemned man has asked for a prostitute. The girl offers to go. The man has bent three mugs on the table. The governor awaits the dawn. The girl takes out a mechanical doll; winds it up. Darkness and fear and the doll that is driven by mechanical springs, the only person who can dance on the edge of the grave. Darkness is terrible and dawn means death.

Let me take your handkerchief. I am with you. Courage. The knot. I am with you. A picture of telepathy. Dust in the light. Thoughts winged. THIS, cinéastes who talk of an independent news reel, is cinema. Images of man and girl on same film. Courage. I am with you. Mix to: the

law has been fulfilled. Can't YOU see that? It is so simple, so just, that you CAN see it. If it had been written, in a poem in a novel, you would have seen it all the time. At the pitch of consciousness there is nothing to hear or smell; every nerve end is optic. We trust so much more to sight than to the other senses. It is the last to leave us in death, in the opium dream.

These two reels of the film should be shown as something complete, something that cannot be touched. They show there are new situations and vital ways of playing them.

The rest of the film is anti climax. The girls of the brothel cry, "Has your man gone to heaven?" They hang a little doll in her room. Gin and gloom AND—the tippet!

Meeting with her sweetheart. She runs from his fury, under the feet of a horse. Rather beautifully a comedy dream wedding. (Anton has a saving sense of humour!) The little train empty, except for the lovers, and the blinds blowing out in the breeze. Empty. . .

SUNDAY (morning). *Hallelujah* reels as promised. Lon Chaney. Ruttman's *Melody of the World* (celluloid cut to the old patterns but sound left unmounted). Paramount song cartoons.

Uh-uh! There is a lot of the modern spirit in Bruxelles. Shop windows and metal chairs. We might even have had some of that (Lon Chaney?) as in Marcel L'Herbier's *L'Enfant de l'Amour* which is (*Le Soir*) in one of the new programmes. (I like L'Herbier's main titles: sky sign and poster kiosk.) The fabrics, glass and the charm of Catelain.

Bruxelles is full of the modern spirit: and the president of the Film Ligia asks me why they show Monsieur Chaney?

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MONDAY. (En Voyage). *Close Up* happens to have seen, commented on, all today's films : *Drifters*, *A Propos de Nice*, etc. Thus, I am leaving the cinéastes. Some of them are so nice, so sincere. Some of them look like the kind of men they stopped using in films five years ago !

Looking back on the Congress there are many surprising omissions. For example, everyone approached the eternal censorship question from the reporters' angle. If they had read Dr. Hanns Sachs' *Capital Punishment* it might have occurred to them that censorship, like capital punishment, is a social manifestation ; that until the guilt complex, like the blood lust, has been conquered BY EDUCATION there is little use in rolling tin cans of abuse down provincial side-steps.

There are, definitely, many pleasing moments of memory. It seems a little too intimate to talk here again of *Borderline*, but I am not alone in thinking it the most innovatory film of the year.

Anyway, the guide to Bruxelles will hold, henceforth, an honoured place on my private bookshelf.

London Footnote.—The boat left Ostende harbour like a touring revue, with a lot of fuss about nothing. An official passed me a leaflet. (Dogs and cats at special rates. Horses, unaccompanied, must book their fares two days in advance.). . . Arriving at London to find the papers full of Maurice Chevalier and his escape from the prison camp.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

A TRUE STORY

This is a record of petty-minded arrogance, bureaucratic conceit and muddle-headed tyranny. It concerns film censorship in England and if any apology is needed for returning to the subject I can only say that to conceal the facts is tantamount to giving up the fight.

As a result of pressure over a long period, the L.C.C. (which, in case you don't know stands for "Lords of Creative Culture") in May of this year passed certain resolutions governing performances by private film societies. All these societies were to be placed upon an equal footing and were to be permitted to show to their members films which had not been submitted to the British Board of Film Censors, provided they adopted model rules and constitutions to be dictated by the L.C.C.

A slight step forward was indicated by these decisions. Hitherto only one film society in London had permission to exhibit banned and uncensored films: now, apparently, all the societies could show uncensored films, but not banned films.

The L.C.C. instructed its Theatres and Music Halls Committee to decide upon the model rules and constitution.

That was in May.

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The Committee drafted its recommendations, four and a half pages of them, single spacing. Published in a good thick volume at thirty shillings it would have made good reading for Blue Book fans. Much of the material was ridiculous, bearing no conceivable relation to a film society's rules. Two, at least, of the societies raised objections.

That was in August.

On October 9th, the Film Society was due to hold its first performance of the season, the London W.F.S. a week later. Less than a week before October 9th the Film Society was informed that its performance must not take place. A day later the decision was reversed and a temporary licence granted.

On October 22nd the L.C.C. met and the whole matter was once again placed before them by the Theatres and Music Halls Committee. The Committee recommended that unless certain clauses were included in the rules of the film societies permission to hold private performances of censored or uncensored films should be refused.

The clauses were twenty-eight in number. A quorum at a general meeting shall be thirty members. The societies' executives shall consist of twelve members. The Executives shall cause minutes to be kept. Payments must be made by cheque, excepting petty cash disbursements. Vouchers shall be taken for all payments made. Executive members must at all times wear pink socks and flannel underwear. (No, sorry, that wasn't in; it must have been an oversight).

If the subscription of a society is less than £1 it must be paid in one complete instalment.

No films containing subversive propaganda must be shown. No film likely to endanger the tranquility of any part of the British Empire must be shown. No film likely to be injurious to morality, or to lead to disorder, or to incite to crime must be shown. No film likely to be in any way offensive, in the circumstances, to public feeling must be shown.

A masterpiece of logical reasoning.

The L.C.C. referred the matter back. The Societies were asked to give their opinions. The London W.F.S. did so—at great length. The L.C.C. met again on October 28th. It referred the matter back. The L.C.C. met on November 4th. With a minor amendment, it passed the whole lot.

Thus, my compatriots, was the Empire saved from disaster on the night of November 4th which, as you know, is the eve of November 5th.

And what is a subversive film, you ask? Don't ask the L.C.C. because they can't tell you. When they were requested to define the term, they merely expressed startled amazement that anybody should suggest that a film society should be permitted to show a subversive film. So that makes that perfectly clear.

You must not endanger the tranquility of any part of the British Empire. Plot for film scenario. Executive (not less than twelve) of a film society in agitated conclave, feverishly wondering whether the new Russian film will cause riots, disturbances and sudden death in the Fiji Islands if shown to their members at the Magnificent Cinema, Piccadilly, London.

No immorality. Again the L.C.C. carefully refrains from

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giving an interpretation of the word. Do tadpoles have sexual passions? If they do don't make a film about it because it will be immoral. And remember *Cosmos*.

No disorder. The British Board of Film Censors, not so long ago, gave it as its considered opinion that *Mother*, whether shown publicly or privately would cause a breach of the peace. During the last few months *Mother* has been shown to large public audiences in several towns in England. There have been no disorders. True, it is rumoured that an old man in Cwmbach lost his false teeth in the excitement of watching the film, but is that a breach of the peace?

Nothing offensive to public feeling. How many sects, political opinions and religious beliefs are comprised in what is known as the "public"? Has there ever yet been a film which has not given some degree of offence to somebody or other? Of course not.

And this matter of the subscription is stamped all over with class bias. The wealthy supporters of the Film Society will not be affected by it in the least. But what about the societies that were formed to enable the workers to see the masterpieces from Russia and other countries?

Temporarily the bureaucrats have won the day. They have not been without assistance from people who, one might have expected, would have had no sympathy with them. A London newspaper gave considerable space to an official of the Film Society and a leading promotor of the new "Film Group," who, in interviews, made it clear that they welcomed a tightening up of the regulations.

The L.C.C. was doubtless greatly encouraged.

But the fight goes on. For the set-back in London is accompanied by a victory in Liverpool where the Workers Film Society showed *The New Babylon* to its members. Six thousand people saw *Storm Over Asia* in Dublin and twice that number paid to see *Mother* in Glasgow.

R. BOND.

CINEMA AND ROBOTS

A large town, full of men and window panes. An old woman, very bent, very attentive, is carefully watering some flowers—metallic flowers in a garland like real flowers. I risk a few words. Silence. Then : “ My dear, in this epoch of ours there is no difference between the artificial and the real.” “ Short-sighted ” I thought, “ perhaps mad.” To-day I think differently and I may say that this little episode became the starting point of my work for the film *Towards the Robots*.

* * *

The artificial and the living intermingle. There exist men who are made of wood, flesh and metal together. Certain very human movements strangely resemble the motion of machinery. Certain machines are becoming more and more

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human. To trace a faithful portrait of the new humanity, that is my greatest desire.

* * *

Towards the Robots was the most difficult film for me to make, much more difficult than my other films. But also the most interesting. The subject, at the beginning of my work, appeared to me to be extremely distant and vague: I went on because I *had* to go on (an inner urge), without knowing exactly where I would end. Then, little by little, everything became clear and definite. I saw, as in a dream, the outlines of my film. It was only left to attain these outlines. That is what I did. The journey was joyous and long.

* * *

The documentary film first set towards "life as it is." This did not succeed. Beautiful photo and clever trick can no longer create illusions. An intervention of the intellect is necessary. Thus, the "documentaire à gags," a documentaire of thoughts mounted cinematographically. In this film the "finishing-off" is of primordial importance. First the "reel": scraps of dreams, sensations seized by the camera, successful gropings, foresight, the film approximately made. Then concentrations of the mind, of the nerves, of the brain; intense tenacious effort, the man entire being carried away, mobilised towards an end which shines like a smile from heaven at the end of a tunnel. Searches. Projections. The films follow you like your shadow. You find and turn new details, new gags, you discover the smallest flaws in your work, you conceive new transitions. You create a rhythm. And the film starts at last to live.

The conception of my film? An entirely "silent" conception. The sonorisation of *La Marche des Machines* showed me that the more a machine is perfected the less noise it makes. Deprived of its realistic noises, reduced to the *silent music* of its wheels and pistons, the machine gains in cinematographic value, strikes the nerves better. It speaks better.

But, but, but . . . silent films are no longer being made. So I have chosen to make a sound-film as little realistic as possible. The accompaniment of *Towards the Robots* will be done by the Rumharmonium of the futurist composer Russolo. The sounds will be "stylises" and transmitted into the same rhythm as the images. Russolo terms this "rhythmic accompaniment."

* * *

I do not wish to discuss the idea of my film. I ought however to say that I am very pleased to have accomplished it solely (without access to literature) by cinematic means. Moreover it could only have been made by that apparatus whose tripod strangely resembles an invalid's crutches. I thank my little apparatus, my little cinema machine.

EUGEN DESLAW.

SAPIENT HOLLYWOOD

Scene : Ballroom of the Embassy Club, Hollywood's most exclusive social organisation.

Dramatis Personae : The elite of filmdom, with Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford as hosts.

Scenario : Herr Ernst Lubitsch, celebrated director, espies Hans Kraly, celebrated scenarist, and, not relishing his appearance there, goes up to him and biffs him on the nose. Frau Helene Lubitsch, recently divorced wife of Herr Lubitsch, doesn't consider this an altogether polite way of greeting her friend and partner, and forthwith gives her former spouse a lesson in manners by punching him on the jaw.

The following day a local newspaper in reporting the occurrence incidentally remarks, "No Hollywood motion picture ball, it now appears, is complete without an impromptu battle between notables nursing grievances." And by way of refreshing the memory of the public it names over some of the many notables who have previously enlivened Hollywood parties by smacking somebody in the face.

Such diversions, however, are not restricted to ballrooms. John Gilbert and Jim Tully, roustabout novelist and critic, choose a fashionable restaurant for staging a brawl, in which

the handsome Sir John is laid out cold. An actor calls on Vivian Duncan at her seaside cottage and concludes an amorous argument with her by sending her to the hospital with a black eye and numerous body bruises, while he himself is hailed before a magistrate. Later, on Hollywood Boulevard, Miss Duncan's brother, punches the ungallant actor in the eye. At a home gathering of film folks the host tops off the bibulous festivities by thrashing one of his guests so thoroughly as to necessitate the calling of an ambulance, while the rest of the party are hauled off to the police station in the interest of public peace.

And so on. From which it may be inferred that the real life of the cinema capital is as highly seasoned as any of its savory scenarios. Moreover, these typical instances of some of the minor social divertissements of filmdom's aristocracy tend to clear up the mystery as to how it is that Hollywood is able so faithfully to portray on the screen the behaviour of ladies and gentlemen in cultured society.

But the chief point of interest centres in the fact, that every professional Hollywood contract contains what is known as a "morals clause," according to which the contract is subject to immediate termination if the individual concerned shall do anything in private life to bring discredit upon himself or the picture industry. And, so far as known, no contract has yet been terminated under the provisions of this clause.

Hollywood is as wise as it is tolerant. It may be short on Art—art with a capital A—but it is undeniably long on the most essential of all cinema arts—showmanship. Never in the history of human enterprise has showmanship reached

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so high a degree of perfection in all its phases as that attained by Hollywood. As an art it is much more than mere ballahoo. It involves, among many other things, the skilful turning to account of that religious readiness on the part of the crowd to believe whatever with due seriousness and a straight countenance it is told to believe.

And with due seriousness and a straight countenance the crowd has been told that its screen deities in actual life are veritable Darbys and Joans for peacefulness and sobriety and connubial devotion. If they were otherwise, ladies and gentlemen, how could they possibly remain with the show and continue to entertain you? Cast your eye on this clause in their contracts!

And the crowd, properly impressed, as simple-mindedly accepts Hollywood pronunciamiento as it does that of the circus showman who looks you in the eye with the declaration that you now see before you the one and only bearded lady in existence. You may have every reason to suspect that the exhibit is neither a lady nor a woman, but the showman's audacity is too much for you. In the face of it you don't dare credit the evidence that tempts your timid soul to disbelieve.

Lately, too, Hollywood has blazoned forth its code of self-censorship, under which its pictures, like its people, cannot be other than of Sunday-school pattern, innocent of guile and eschewing whatsoever is naughty or suggestive. And having thus confidently prepossessed the crowd, it proceeds to give us *Madam Satan*, *The Divorcee*, *The Matrimonial Bed*, *Her Wedding Night* and others of like genre.

We may think we detect in these films much that contra-

dicts Hollywood's high moral assurances, but Hollywood has cutely put us on the defensive. For fear that it may taunt us with *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, we hold our peace; finding it easier to be faithless to our senses than to question the solemn word of the showman.

Say what you will, Hollywood knows its business; and what it doesn't know about art is not worth knowing.

CLIFFORD HOWARD.

L'ESPRIT DU FILME

Il n'est guère fréquent de voir paraître un ouvrage intelligent sur le sujet du cinéma, et c'est pourquoi l'on doit doublement se réjouir de celui que Béla BALASZ vient de publier.* Soyons net: c'est ici le premier essai d'un traité complet d'esthétique cinégraphique. Une culture étendue, des vues pénétrantes, un esprit qui se donne la peine de soupeser les mots et d'analyser les notions essentielles, tel est l'auteur.

Béla Balasz énonce dans son livre un certain nombre de propositions d'une extrême importance; elles sont d'authentiques découvertes. Il développe avant tout cette idée que le cinéma est non seulement un art, mais surtout un langage

* BELA BALASZ—Der Geist des Films, Wilhelm Knapp, Halle.

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nouveau : langage dont l'alphabet et la grammaire ont déjà subi une évolution telle qu'une personne longtemps absente de nos salles soit totalement déroutée lorsque transportée brusquement devant l'écran contemporain. Ce principe fondamental—l'existence d'un langage nouveau—ne saurait être surestimé. C'est l'analyse de cette nouvelle syntaxe qui livrera des lois esthétiques neuves et certaines. Avant d'énoncer les plus importantes de ces lois, il convient encore de souligner la méthode même de l'analyse : en premier lieu on expose les procédés caractéristiques du cinéma, gros-plan, variations des positions de l'oeil cinématographique, montage ; en deuxième lieu, on dégage de cet exposé un certain nombre de constatations fondamentales. En dernier lieu, enfin, on déduit une suite de théorèmes. C'est en effet ce terme emprunté au langage mathématique qu'il est exact d'employer : nous avons affaire à des énoncés suivis de démonstrations, édifiés sur un certain nombre de postulats. Je retiendrai les théorèmes les plus remarquables. D'abord ceux qui découlent d'une analyse approfondie de la technique du gros-plan, à laquelle Béla Balasz attache une juste importance : LE CINEMA SUPPRIME LA DISTANCE FIXE ENTRE LE SPECTATEUR ET L'OBJET, notion jusqu'ici essentielle aux arts édifiés sur le sens optique (principe d'identification du spectateur à l'objet).

LE GROS-PLAN DU VISAGE HUMAIN A SUPPRIME LA NOTION D'ESPACE RELATIF.

La découverte de ces lois est extrêmement grande. Nous avons affaire à des principes uniquement valables dans ce domaine de l'art et cependant d'une portée philosophique con-

sidérable. Ils permettent notamment de différencier définitivement le cinéma du théâtre auquel ils ne sauraient s'appliquer, ni même avoir à son propos de signification. L'un et l'autre expliquent également la puissance pathétique du cinéma; nous vivons avec l'objet représenté et celui-ci peut être élevé au rang de symbole actif et absolu.

Parmi les théorèmes déduits de l'analyse du montage, je cite :

LES IMAGES CINEMATOGRAPHIQUES N'ONT DE VALEUR QU'ACTUELLE; ELLES NE SE CONJUGENT POINT DANS LE TEMPS;

LES IMAGES CINEMATOGRAPHIQUES PEUVENT REPRESENTER LA DUREE AU MOYEN DE TRANSFORMATIONS (ou de TRANSLATIONS) OPTIQUES.

Cette dernière proposition est particulièrement remarquable; il ne m'apparaît point qu'aucun autre art, et même la musique, puisse ainsi transmuter une des catégories kantienne de l'esprit : au moyen de transpositions optiques, de déplacement de groupes à trois dimensions, on fait apparaître une quatrième dimension. Ceci mériterait de longs développements.

En dehors de ces lois, Béla Balasz expose les tentatives et les résultats : découverte des types d'une classe sociale—valeur unanimiste du cinéma—analyse des effets provoqués par l'iris, le diaphragme, l'angle de prise de vue—étude des éléments du contrepoint visuel—exploration du monde sonore par le film.

On peut ici discuter avec l'auteur, contester la portée de

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certaines observations : on doit toujours lui rendre cet hommage, d'avoir mené plus loin que tout autre l'exposition et l'analyse du monde cinématographique. Si l'on voulait commenter cet ouvrage avec le sérieux qu'il mérite, c'en est un autre, tout autre considérable, qu'il faudrait écrire.

ARNOLD KOHLER.

LE FILME EXPERIMENTALE EN SUISSE

Le Suisse trait sa vache et vit paisiblement. Victor Hugo l'a dit, ce n'est pas une raison pour en douter, bien que l'on ne puisse pas assimiler, actuellement, tous les Helvétiens à de débonnaires armaillis. Il convient cependant de retenir, de la remarque bienveillante du poète français, ce qui, au fond, ne peut manquer de traduire assez fidèlement le caractère du génie national, à savoir, l'amour de l'ordre et l'instinctive répugnance d'une activité qui n'offre, à sa base, aucun élément matériellement justificatif. L'imagination, convenons-en, n'est point notre fait, et si peu que l'on se hasarde, dans un domaine ou dans l'autre, l'on se garde de perdre contact avec la réalité. Sens moral chez les uns, bonsens tout court chez les autres . . . préviennent tout écart important de fantaisie. Et pourtant, de temps à autre, un

citoyen se lève et s'en va affirmer, à Paris, ou ailleurs, une hardiesse de propos, une compréhension personnelle des choses qui le classent bon gré mal gré au rang des plus remarquables intellectuels. Après quoi, revenu au pays, sa lettre de crédit étrangère en poche, le téméraire Helvétien se verra entouré d'amis de toute espèce, une chapelle naîtra, à laquelle ne fera pas défaut, certes, l'esprit de clocher.

Pour en venir au cinéma, signalons d'emblée qu'à part certaine production effectuée à la publicité, où le meilleur et le pire se rencontrent parfois, il n'existe aucune maison suisse, aucun cinéaste, dont nous puissions raisonnablement commenter l'activité dans une revue telle que celle-ci. L'office Cinématographique, à Lausanne, édite bien, chaque semaine, une sorte de chronique des actualités nationales, mais c'est à grand peine qu'il y parvient : avalanches, inondations, fêtes, manifestations sportives en composent le menu menu. Praesens Film s'ingénie, de son côté, à composer des tracts publicitaires aussi convaincants que possible, mêlant l'alpage et le torrent aux emballages de chocolat.

Pour être équitable, mentionnons toutefois le film que Mr. A. Porchet, à Genève, tourna à ses moments perdus, sur **LES AUTOMATES** de l'horloger Cottier. Il n'a rien, reconnaissons-le, d'un chef-d'oeuvre, mais il indique chez son auteur le désir de faire de la camera, un moyen personnel d'expression. C'est là l'essentiel. Pour la documentation du lecteur, rappelons simplement que les automates en question, construits de différentes petites pièces d'horlogerie sont animés de mouvements parfois très réussis. Plaçant ces petits bonshommes dans des décors agréablement dessinés, Mr. Porchet les fait saillir en silhouettes et prendre part à

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quelques petites scènettes locales bien faites pour la gent mécanique et lilliputienne qui a charge de les interpréter.

Et c'est tout ! Il est vrai que nous ne classerons pas au nombre des films expérimentaux : *Le Problème de la Circulation*, tourné par Mr. Porchet, également, et qui expose en quelques exemples frappants la tactique des usagers de la route, pas plus que certain film édité par un parti politique de Genève, et qui souligne maintes lacunes ou maints excès : ponts—routes inachevés—projets tombés à l'eau—inventaire draconien au décès d'un contribuable, etc.

FREDDY CHEVALLEY.

A RUSSIAN FILM: *THE BLUE EXPRESS*

Scenario : Ilya Trauberg.

Production : Sovkino.

Berlin,
October, 1930.

A splendid cavalry charge, just as the troops had settled themselves in the trenches. A film silent from its conception to its presentation, massively powerful in structure, a giver of brutal blows. A film that awakens and flagellates. It was high time : with heavy eyelids, torpid minds and swollen

ears, Berlin spectators were occupied at the end of the day in shifting from red armchairs to grey armchairs.

There are misleading suggestions in the title, *The Blue Express*. One imagines a train gliding along the margin of the sea, sunlit, idyllic. Going smoothly and swiftly in the service of a pampered élite. . . Why not call it *The Yellow Express*, so that one might see its headlong progress, like a river carrying along all it can seize from the country through which it passes, muddy, turgid, befouled; rich, powerful, irresistible. And dangerous.

Potemkin in 1926, *Storm Over Asia* in 1928, *The Blue Express* in 1930. Scatter between these summits a few social dramas of kindred quality, a few dramatised theorems, a few documentary films more dramatic than love-stories, and you have the Russian film to date. Opening on the sea, this silent cycle ends inland like a successful assault.

An express, setting off from a station of one of the twenty-two provinces of China, for a frontier town. Restaurant car, second class, third class, then fourth and even cattle-trucks. The whole of China in movement, old and new: its disciplined soldiery, its yellow faces, its students, its monks, its work-people, its children who are merchandise bound for the silk-weaving factories. Sleepers and those who are on the alert. Whom do they await? The "President," at once dictator, general and adventurer.

Fanfare: one, two, one, two. Here he is. He takes off his gloves, salutes the yellow officer and, aside, dries his hand on his pocket—oh, with an *almost* imperceptible movement. The chemical preparation is well graded. The reac-

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tion will be sure. The dispute breaks out in the course of the journey, on account of a little sick girl, a glass of water, two drunken soldiers. In the midst of a scuffle, "the shot" is fired. A body falls. Outbreak, clamour, revolt. The insurgents seize weapons, take possession from coach to coach along the length of the train as it hurtles through the countryside. In the crowded corridors, amidst smoke and overturned furniture the president is losing the game. But he is not the odious adventurer one had imagined. Wounded, he goes on fighting until it is time to turn his revolver against himself, against his heart, above his stomach. Falling, he grasps at the table, the table-cloth rather, which he draws over his face in order that he may die in solitude. Bottles sway and crash. A wave of feeling, passing through the auditorium, breaks into applause.

The mad train—one is reminded of Gance—must at all costs reach the frontier. It will succeed at dawn, in spite of the frenzied telephoning and telegraphing of frantic stationmasters. It will not crash in crossing the points whither a loyal employee would have led it. And that, thanks to a mortally-wounded man who uses his last strength to drag himself as far as the lever. The train can go on. Almost under its wheels lies a body, a corpse stiffened in the service of an idea.

Symbols, symbols. Everything is symbolic. But without undue insistence. There is nothing to recall the tempest at the end of *Storm Over Asia*. Intensive scenario supported by acting of first-rate quality, and by brilliant technique. It is possible to regret a certain lack of externals. The Russians are more at home in handling sand, wind, the

steppes, than the carriages of the International Sleeping-car Company.

In spite of the able tendenciousness of the scenario and an apparent impartiality that deceives no one, *The Blue Express* reaches us at the beginning of the winter as a tonic, a regenerator of phragocytes so badly needed for the facing of "great hundred per cent. stories."

The Blue Express, a silent film by Ilya Trauberg, is a name to be remembered.

CLAUDE MARTIN.

BOOK REVIEWS

STARS IN THEIR COURSES.

A lion-farm where the animals are taught to keep their paws out of their dinner-pail . . . petrol stations imitating the Taj Mahal and the Kremlin . . . prayers from Aimee's lighthouse at one pound for quarter of an hour's professional intercession . . . the best museum of pre-historic animals in the world . . . and bungalows dominated by the truncated liner of the Lasky lot . . . that is Hollywood. Hollywood, that gigantic slot-machine that works only with million-dollar bills, Hollywood more fantastic than any Riviera

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palmlage or Tottenham Court Road fun fair, and like both of them so much.

In *Star-Dust in Hollywood*,* We have it all; or rather so much of it that is not in the fan-papers or van Vechten (that is the charm of it), that we think we now have it all. It is pleasant to find so many stories that one has not heard *ad nauseam* before; so many of the scandals that slip out have the air of having been carefully doctored by the publicity department before, that it is reassuring to find the authors saying "Los Angeles-cum-Hollywood is a kind of human-house disease breaking out on the desert's face . . . four hundred square miles of household monotony"—and the house the authors lived in was tiger-painted black and orange, one of many—"It is a wilful town, that draws a hundred and sixty million dollars worth of tourists to it a year. Yet there is nothing for them to look at when they arrive . . . a casual visitor might drive in and around the place and hardly suspect that the movies exist, unless he came on the big truncated liner of the Lasky lot rearing its decks above the surrounding bungalows." That somehow gives a feeling that the approach is authentic; at any rate, refreshing. This Lasky lot features prominently; they saw *The Docks of New York* being made (and incidentally have a good appraisal of von Sternberg). They recount how Betty Compson was kept for hours in a tank of cold water many nights a week and how Nujol was sprayed in the air for fog, how Bancroft had a contraption to help him carry Betty Compson . . . and they tell how the stars duelled

* Jan and Cora Gordon, Harrap. 12s. 6d.

with the director, because he was out for wholehearted realism and they had their public to think of, but could not on the other hand afford to miss what might be a "triumph of realism." There is also the interesting history of the film we saw as *The Case of Lena Smith*. Here it is as the author planned it. "It's about an unmarried mother. She has a baby which is the only thing she lives for. In fact, to provide for it she is at last driven to the streets. Then one of those interfering societies steps in and has the baby taken from her. Why, they might as well tear the heart from her. The rest of the play shows the girl's attempts to drag herself back to social respectability to get the child back again. That is my story. Only a simple bit of life. But it is somehow different from the ordinary movie plot, I think." And here is the film as we saw it. First, it was taken from modern America and set in Vienna of 1850, with a carnival. "But you know, old man, this unmarried mother stuff won't go with the great American public, so we'll have to make it seem like she was seduced by the young man of the house; then he gets killed or something and she has lost her secret marriage licence. But in the end he turns up and proves she was married to him after all." Isn't the book worth the twelve and six Harraps want, for that?

Then there is the story of Aimee Macpherson riding into her temple, dressed as a speed cop, on a motor bike, and shouting, "Stop! You are speeding to hell." And of the athletic star whom three workmen and one lever are needed to get onto his horse—a drawing which embellishes this leaves no doubt as to identity, and if you think this is a sheer gossip-book, there is the history of lovers kidnapped

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for husbands by masked men and carried into the desert, "where, in a shack fitted with latest conveniences of modern surgery, masked doctors and nurses have carried out a slight but drastic operation common in the Moslem East." Yes, sir, the fourth grèatest industry! Finally, there is Mr. Mix explaining to the Friday Morning Club that "if any accident should happen to me in the course of my playing, I'll be sure that it's the voice of God Himself saying to me, 'Tom Mix, retire; your work is finished'"—and a few weeks later being hauled up for "plugging a girl dancer in the eye at a booze party." "But you can't condemn a million dollars. Mr. Mix was acquitted."

The films mentioned in this book besides *Docks of New York* are *Show Boat*, *The Four Feathers*, *The Rescue*, *Gauche*, *Black Pirate*, *inter alia*. It is more than a gossip book, because underneath it you see the Hollywood which these authors make so credibly unbelievable. If I like it more than I should, it is because I have always found the "vagabond authors" most tiresome, with all their quaintness and out-of-touchness. But Hollywood seems to have shocked their search for the picturesque and given their outlook, at least for this book, a quite commendable dryness and wit.

R. H.

Stars of the Screen. 1931. Herbert Joseph. 2s. 6d.

A most interesting book—if you like that sort of thing.

Mr. Bermingham's choice, though, seems a little wilful. Why Agnes Ayres (who hasn't made a picture in how long?) when Rosalinde Fuller is excluded? Langford Reed and

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Hetty Spiers' *Who's Who in Filmland* is far more comprehensive, but then it has no illustrations.

Fee-fi-fo-fum! One cannot frighten away the fans with such fretful quibbles. And there are new features: *Stars on Records*, *Ages at a Glance*, *Obituary*, *Wampas Baby Stars*.
O. B.

The author of *In the Old Days* (*Close Up*. Vol. 6. Nos. 4 and 5) and "The Barmaid" of *Borderline* has published a first novel, *Poor Faun* (Putnam. 7s. 6d.).

Charlotte Arthur's tale is of a man from whom others tried to embezzle life. He was beautiful and selfish and suffered tantrums with gusto. Others tried to domesticate the faun. Febrility of anger and recrimination.

The book gives pleasure and thrill. There is nothing "phonographic" but it is an exciting creation. A fillip to the whole novel reading and appreciating world.

O. B.

CENSORED, THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE MOVIES.

(By Morris Ernst and Pare Lorentz. Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith Ed.)

A new book dealing with American censorship, is equally significant for this entire, eternal question.

The book comes at its right moment. Censorship, that Question, becomes more and more a universal problem, if

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one may say so, in view of complications wrought by Talk, and the imminent practical application of television.

For, almost everywhere, the word is not censored—unless it be accompanied with images. Thus, with perfect illegality, is the spoken word thrust under guardianship in speaking films. Why? It is not justifiable, rather no justification could be found, or given, by those who exercise this trade (or is it profession?).

The two authors of *Censored*, Pare Lorentz, cinema critic of the New York weekly, *Judge*, and Morris Ernst, a jurist, have, with quite certain success, striven to reveal how much remains sheerly arbitrary in censorship's actual practise.

Meet Miss Emma Speed Samson, member of the censorship board of Old Virginny: "Supposed to be a descendant of John Keats, but for the sake of literature we haven't investigated the rumour."

"And," they continue, "despite the great collection of educational experts, then at the call of the State Department of Education, the movie seen by a million people a day in New York City alone, is so unimportant that the interpretation of "indecency" "inhumanism," is left to the state constabulary, usually selected for their shooting and riding ability. We could imagine their fitness to judge the merit of a Tom Mix western, but we wonder at their ability for passing on Ibsen, Maugham or Eugene O'Neill."

Very often, if not always, censors are chosen for political reasons. But no responsibility lies on the shoulders of these demi-gods:

"Street car conductors, subway guards, pool-room pro-

prietors, and soda jerkers have to pass some sort of examination. Does the censor pass an examination? He does not!" Why not? Who'll ever understand that?

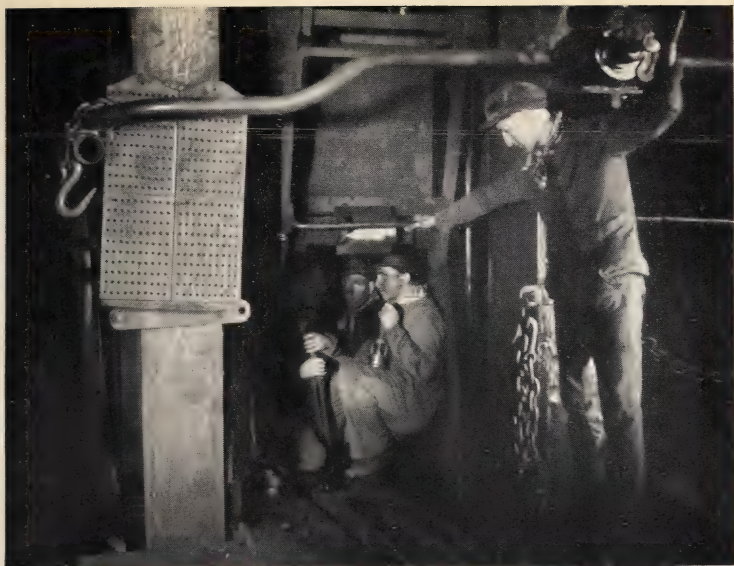
But let us look closer at the misdeeds of the "saints" as the authors term these scissor-wielders who destroy good films, men for whom "God is a force in the world that moves to preserve Christian virginity!"

"In *Moulin Rouge*, by E. A. Dupont, they eliminated a series of scenes showing bare-legged girls 'as they indecently kick'. Only a movie censor could tell when a kick is indecent."

The saints of Ohio are beings who see the function of scissors from a special angle. "They ordered a long scene cut out from *Street of Sin*, because of 'expression on man's face as he looks at Salvation Army girl'. The actor was Emil Jannings and it is indeed complimentary even to him for the board to suggest that the mere memory of the look on his face would turn tender Ohioians into raving predatory beasts, and cause them to rush out of the movie theatres with lust dripping from their eyes. Possibly Jannings was thinking of the beer back home, or had eaten too much breakfast, but in Ohio it was shameful, that look."

Further "Be it written by a bell-hop or created by the hand of an acknowledged artist, any scene between a man and woman becomes dubious the minute they come within thirty-five feet of each other."

The saints of Maryland are no less profligate. "They have decreed that a kiss on the neck is worth three or four hundred anywhere else."



From *La Fosse Ardente*, a Praesens Film by Rigo Arnould.



From *The Depths of the Sea*, a full-length drama by H. J. J. Buyse. The roles are interpreted by Peter van Hecke (the young fisherman), Gust Maes, Regisseur of the Royal Flemish Theatre in Brussels, and Elza Young.



From *The Depths of the Sea*, by H. J. Buyse.





From *The Depths of the Sea*, by H. J. J. Buyse.



From *Topical*, a documentary by Henri Storck.



From the first independent film made in Czechoslovakia, *The Useless Walk*, by Alexandr Hackenschmied. It was photographed on an Ica for Filmklub, an association formed to make independent films and to introduce the best work of similar organisations into Czechoslovakia.



From *Flamme Blanche*, the new Belgian film by Dekeukeleire.



From *The Call of Life* (*L'Appel de la Vie*), the film made by Tissé and Berna, cameramen on Eisenstein's *Old and New* (*General Line*), in a Swiss maternity home, and immediately banned. Praesens Film, Zurich.





La Fosse Ardente, directed by Rigo Arnould, for *Præsens Film*, is a full-length film, in which a mine explosion forms the climax.

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The censors of New York aren't exactly bad men, but they look after those who got them their jobs. "Where Pennsylvania (one of the states distinguished for enraged clipping in all unindicated places) is worried about sex, New York bites it nails over corruption. Political job-holders themselves, the New York Board very logically refuses to allow any ugly remarks to be passed about politicians in general."

Statistic for 1928 :

528 cuts ordered of scenes showing dangerous arms.

509 „ „ „ of too impassioned love.

Don't let me omit that which I consider most charming :

35 cuts of scenes where the actor thumbs his nose at someone !

Ridiculous *in excelsis* becomes censorship of speaking films, drawn from theatre pieces. "Thousands of people saw these plays (*Coquette*, *Constant Wife*, *Broadway*, *Burlesque*, *Front Page*, *Little Accident*, *Interference*, *On Trial*, *Trial of Mary Dugan*). Not one play reached the movies without being changed in advance by the Hays office, or censored by a state board after release. And not one movie corporation made a real fight against this violation."

But, say the authors, further on, "The American is no fool. The movie bores him, so he drinks gin. The radio irritates him so he takes his neighbour's wife. Organisation eventually will suffocate him, and he will start breaking the machinery. Unhappy, violent, yet bored, middle class America is capable of any rebellion. And all the mergers in the world will not purge it."

Speaking of censorship in general, the authors utter this

just and suffocating truth: "They, the censors, like their work. They refuse to discuss it with prying reporters. They belong to the sequestered saintly. And they are not brilliant. Misfits. Lawyers, doctors and writers who failed to make good. After all, it is not an honorable job. It isn't something to boast about before a group of real men and women."

And, alas, their power grows! Indolence and ignorance of the public is one of the reasons for it. But perhaps it may be more readily admitted the day censorship creeps into radio and television, as the authors foresee, in an epilogue filled with *satire efficace*: "Through the courtesy of the Amalgamated International Electric Company and Associated News Bureaux, the Congress of the United States announces to its citizens that today it has declared war against Russia, Africa and Ireland.

The announcer steps back to wipe his pale brow.

There is a flutter of excitement among the listening groups. Two women clap their hands neatly. By courtesy, the speaker goes on, of the Associated Food Company, the Universal Chain Stores, and Associated Advertisers, the Marine Band will now play *The Star Spangled Banner*.

"The Marine Band is switched to the air by the shirt-sleeved men, and 35,000,000 television sets quiver to the stirring refrain. Progress has declared another war to end war."

Thus closes a book which should be read by everybody.

JEAN LENAUER.

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HANDBUCH DER FILMWIRTSCHAFT (Jahrgang 1930) edited by Dr. A. Jason. (Verlag für Presse, Wirtschaft und Politik, Berlin SW 48, Friedrichstr. 240/41). Price 5 RM.

It has become a tradition (risen from necessity) that each branch of science, economics, commerce, having reached a certain importance, has its handbook. Many publications have been made on the film under all sorts of view-points; reports, statistics, statements, etc. But—as far as we know—it is Jason's *Handbuch der Filmwirtschaft* which tries to give the first comprehensive survey on motion-pictures in Germany in a condensed and summarized form. This well arranged handbook is devoted chiefly to "play-films", (short and long ones) of German and foreign origin, sound-films included. But there is also a chapter dealing with documentary, instructive and advertisement films. I suppose that it has not been an easy job to gather on 180 pages only, various essays by prominent persons of the German Film-industry, the history of German films and cinemas from the end of last century till 1929, statistics concerning the stages of development, lists of the producers, renters, authors, theatres, import-lists, names, figures, figures, names, lists. Half of the handbook is devoted to the year 1929. What films have been played, when they passed the censors, from which countries they came, who produced, who directed, who played in them—you will find that in the handbook besides complete lists of all the persons and firms connected with the German film-industry. The lists are linked by short explanation.

But he who knows how to read from figures will have

occasion to come to other hundreds of interesting conclusions, interesting from the historical, economical, technical, commercial, and also psychological points of view. And it is of practical value especially for people who are in touch with the German film-market.

The editor of the handbook intends to continue this first volume with supplementary annuals.

T. W.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

A REVIVAL.

One begins to feel ashamed of the exaggerated respect which one felt for the German films, remembering *Two Brothers* and *Hands of Orlac* rather than *New Year's Eve* and *The Student of Prague*. The latter was recently at the Gaiety, Tottenham Court Road.

Certain sequences dragged, certain parts of the development seemed unskilful, but the concluding scenes of terror and madness retained their former power. There are no concessions, the public should hate it heartily.

Dead it is, who can say boldly that it has sapped the desire to live? *The Student of Prague* must only be seen in the most desolate surroundings, at the most unaccustomed times, after the worst experiences. Sacrilege to include it in a repertory of "unusual" films, where its meaning would be

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lost. Is it fantastic to suppose the same powers which governed the destinies and events of the film conspired to take the control of its making from those to whom it is attributed. Certainly no human mind could have pre-conceived it.

Magic or accident, which?

H. A. M.

ROMANCE SENTIMENTALE.

(S. M. Eisenstein.)

This film is described as after an old Russian romance but romance in the sense of the play taken for Garbo's new film is kept out of it. The German title "Sehnsucht" gives the note of unsentimentalised yearning; a feeling which instead of developing into pure *cafard* works itself up into pure exhilaration. In this sense the atmosphere is romantic; the montage, and Eisenstein's use of sound (no words) is classic, in the newer way of Scriabin and Debussy, to whose overtones Eisenstein likens his own.

First a storm; wind, trees, waves, pools, rain. Tissé who did *Potemkin* is the cameraman; he is particularly successful here also with the sharply tilting camera: trees seen falling forwards and backwards, and shot of a wave breaking *from behind*—your breath catches. Music discreetly programme. The storm calms. Shot of once waving branches hanging motionless while clouds still drift behind; an extraordinarily profound comment on cessation of motion.

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Then a woman restless in a room; restless cutting, of her outlined against a French window; sharp glances at clock; a dog's uneasy pacing and watchful repose, head stretched on paws. The woman begins to play the piano, sings, breaks off unquiet. Again begins to play. The song works up to a long climax.

The camera runs far back; a drop of rain hisses in the log fire. Great stars blaze in the sky and gold rains against black and drop sizzling into the calm dark pools whose rings widen. The song beats on us; cold Greek statues lie under water, suddenly embrace (cf. the roaring of the stone lion in *Potemkin*). Then slow cool cutting: the woman at the piano floats white against transparent clouds and translucent sea. The voice works to an insistent triumph.

Blossom white against a pale sky.

JUDITH TODD.

Vienna,
November, 1930.

REPERTORY: A SOLUTION.

So far as the Cinema world is concerned Scotland simply does not exist. It takes what it is given, The Cohens and the Kellys, Ivor Novello—Prince Charlie, the *Loves of Robert Burns* (not quite), sits tight, and says nothing. It seems almost incredible therefore that any new idea concerning the cinema should emerge from its grey mists.

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Edinburgh is famous for, and in spite of, many unusual features, but if you walk along Princes Street to-day you will find one more wonder added to its attractions. Here in the heart of the city you will find a cinema—small, it is true, but nevertheless a cinema—showing a repertory programme! Here in the capital of a small country which, until ten years ago, was regarded as decadent, backward and hopelessly jejune, and is not yet represented on the League of Nations, is something which London, the pride of the Empire and the centre of the British film industry, cannot boast of having—a repertory cinema theatre, not run by a combine to bolster up box-office failures, but brought into being by amateurs and laymen.

Let me tell the advanced countries how it all came about.

Within my own circle of acquaintances I found the greatest dissatisfaction with the type of film which the Edinburgh exhibitors—in common with others all over the world—were showing, and in response to a series of articles in the daily press I found the same dissatisfaction among the public in general.

I then outlined in a further article how one of the smaller cinemas could earn the everlasting thanks of these people and at the same time build up a steady patronage by adopting a repertory policy. But the exhibitors either misjudged public taste or lacked business instinct, for nothing happened. Small cinemas continued to wire-up or close-down as more and more “supers” were opened.

Writing and talking were evidently powerless to move to action, so I decided to do something practical on my own account. I got in touch with every one I knew to be seriously

interested in films and asked if they would support me in the formation of a film society which would make efforts to secure films which, with ironic aptness, are termed "unusual." The support I received was enthusiastic and encouraging, and I forthwith approached with a concrete proposal the management of one of the few remaining small cinemas still faithful to silence.

If you will obtain for us, I said, the films we want, give us a room where we can hold meetings and use as a clubroom, we will guarantee you a regular weekly patronage, frequent your café, and by our activities advertise your cinema and attract the public at present suffering from Hollywood nausea. Thank heaven he listened to reason and agreed to our proposals.

The films were to be shown in the course in the ordinary programme, the cost being borne by the management, who were, it is easily seen, not out of pocket, as they had to secure a film of some sort in any case. We were thus saved the worry of financial embarrassment and could go ahead with the work of building up our organisation.

We did. The Edinburgh Film Guild came into being. For a monthly subscription of two shillings we were able to offer to members admission to all performances of the cinema, as often as they wished; use of the club-room, permanently open; a syllabus of lectures and debates; and a library of film books and the best of the international film periodicals. The first public meeting was crowded to the point of discomfort, and the enthusiasm displayed was gratifying evidence of the rightness of my beliefs. Some day the ostrich-like "trade" will realise that the public interested in films

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as an art is not a small one, but only needs cultivating and organising.

Scotsmen are always ambitious creatures, and in our objects we included "if supports were forthcoming" the intention to engage in the production of films of a documentary nature, and to encourage among members individual work on constructive lines, both with standard and miniature apparatus. So many people have displayed such a real interest in this proposal that steps are being taken immediately to appoint a production committee, with the main object in view, after the experimental stage is over, of making a film of Edinburgh, which with its crazy Old Town, the Georgian dignity of the New, its docks and industrial outskirts, is admirably suited to such a project.

One last word. Banned films and films unsuitable for showing in the course of an ordinary public performance, are to be shown on Sundays. The *efg* is anxious to get in touch with persons who have produced unusual films either on standard or sub-standard apparatus, with a view to including such films in future programmes. Communications should be sent to the Hon. Sec. *efg*, 8, Orchard Place, Craigleith Road, Edinburgh, W.C., Scotland.

NORMAN WILSON.

HOLLYWOOD NOTES.

As predicted by this writer at the time of S. M. Eisenstein's arrival in Hollywood last May, the Russian director

will return home without making a picture for Paramount. It was obvious from the beginning that Hollywood and Moscow could never amalgamate. Not only did it prove impossible for Paramount and Eisenstein to agree upon any one of the many scenarios that were considered, but, also, when Theodore Dreisser's novel, *An American Tragedy*, was eventually selected as a possible vehicle, dispute at once arose over method of treatment. And the upshot of the business has been the dissolving of Eisenstein's contract by mutual agreement. No doubt, both parties to it are glad of the outcome—especially Hollywood. The steadily growing public suspicion and resentment of Communists in the film Capital, some of it directed specifically against the Soviet director, had recently given Hollywood additional cause for uneasiness, as well as chagrin over its foolishness in ever having sought to adopt and exploit a man like Eisenstein.

* * *

Snow, rain, wind, cyclones, thunder and lightning are brands of weather which Hollywood for many years has been manufacturing to order, to meet picture needs. But it has remained for Paramount to create an ocean fog at the time and place required. In George Bancroft's current film, *The Derelict*, a sudden dense fog arises and causes two vessels to collide in mid-ocean. With the aid of the United States Navy an extensive smoke screen, realistically simulating fog, was laid down over the surface of the water some thirty miles off the coast of Southern California.

* * *

Hollywood does not confine itself alone to originalities in picture production. Its enterprising genius is also devoted

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to novel methods of advertising films at the local theatres. The latest of these is the broadcasting of announcements from aeroplanes, which fly about over the city and compel everyone willy-nilly to harken to the superlative merits of *His Office Wife* or *Just Imagine*, as bellowed from a magnavox in stentorian tones.

* * *

Stepin Fetchit, the Negro comedian, whose characterisation was responsible for the success of *Hearts in Dixie*, has a prominent rôle in the new Lawrence Tibbett M-G-M picture, *The Southerner*, due for release early in the new year. Incidentally, the first selected director for the film, King Vidor, has been replaced by Harry Pollard.

* * *

The success of Fox's *Men Without Women* has prompted that company to undertake another undersea picture. This second venture, *The Seas Beneath*, which went into production in October, is described as a story of striking romance, submarine warfare and "mystery ships." Authentic and realistic atmosphere will be given the picture through the cooperation of the United States Navy in permitting the use of several of the latest type submarines and a destroyer squadron. Marguerite Churchill, of *The Big Trail*, will share the chief character honours with George O'Brien.

* * *

Now and again some of Hollywood's latent artistic genius manages to find expression. A recent example is that of a short film based on Ambrose Bierce's story, *The Bridge*, produced and directed by Charles Vidor, of Budapest. Despite the inherent difficulty of screening the work of an author who

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out-Poed Poe in psychologic fantasy, Vidor has admirably succeeded in preserving the illusional and introspective qualities of this particular story—that of a spy who is hanged from the parapet of a bridge and in his dying moment imagines the rope has broken and that he is making his escape, to return to his wife and child. Aside from this as an artistic accomplishment, the film is noteworthy by reason of the simplicity and economy of its production. Many of its scenes were taken with only a hand camera, and its total cost was but \$250, exclusive of some supplemental sound recordings. The picture had its initial showing at Filmarte.

* * *

Filmarte Theatre, devoted to the showing of unusual and artistic pictures, is now affording Hollywood an opportunity of viewing some of the European talking productions. The first of these to be presented was Erich Pommer's UFA *Melodie Des Herzens*, directed by Hanns Schwarz and featuring Dita Parlo and Willy Fritsch. Its restrained, natural use of dialogue and its felicitous blending of sound with action and photography, as well as the poetic quality of its camera work by Günther Rittau, were something of a revelation to Hollywood which is still all too prone to over-emphasize speech and incidental sound at the expense of cinematic unity.

* * *

George Bancroft's next Paramount picture will be *Unfit to Print*.

Will Rogers, following his current *Lightnin'*, will appear in the title rôle of *A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur*, a Fox reproduction.

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Warner Brothers are completing a German version of their *Moby Dick*, directed by Michael Curtiz, with Wilhelm Dieterle essaying the rôle taken by John Barrymore in the original. Also for the German market the same company are producing *Kismet*, in which Dita Parlo and Gustav Froelich, of UFA, are the leading characters, supported by other players brought from Germany.

Erich von Stroheim is doing over for Universal his twelve-year-old *Blind Husbands*, and is scheduled to follow it with a reproduction of his *Merry-Go-Round*.

Educational Pictures are putting out a series of true mystery stories based on the experiences of William Burns, internationally famous criminologist and detective.

Seeing Hollywood, an M-G-M German film, directed by Frank Reicher and featuring Paul Morgan, will include as incidental characters Nora Gregor, Oscar Strauss, Buster Keaton, Ramon Novarro, John Gilbert, Greta Garbo, Raquel Torres, Norma Shearer and Marie Dressler.

William K. Howard is directing for Fox the screen adaptation of Pierre Benoit's novel, *Axelle*.

Under M-G-M's banner Ramon Navarro will next be starred in Schnitzler's *Daybreak*. Greta Garbo, following her *Inspiration*, will be seen as Mata Hari in an original photoplay written around the glamorous and tragic character of this daring German war spy. Norma Shearer will play *The Lady in the Evening Gown*, a comedy by Yves Mirande, the French playwright.

Fox is doing over *The Big Trail* in four other languages—French, German, Spanish and Italian.

C. H.

Professor Fritz Wichert has retired from the administration of *Das Neue Frankfurt*. This review will be issued in future by the present editor Dr. J. Gantnez in collaboration with Mr. Ernst May and Mr. Ulrich Burmann, director of the *Frankfurter Gartenstadt Gesellschaft*.

The town of Frankfurt was invited to send an exhibition of its constructive work to the Third International Congress of Modern architecture held at Brussels in November. This exhibition will be sent from there to different places in England and Germany.

A league, *The New Frankfurt*, has also been created by Mr. Ernst May, in collaboration with the paper, to organise all opportunities of development in order that projects of an artistic and architectural nature may be fully realised.

The report of the annual meeting of the Commission for Cultural and Educational Films is too long to be included in this issue but will be printed in the March number of *Close Up*.

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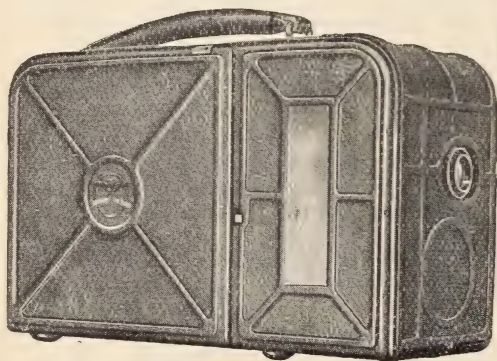
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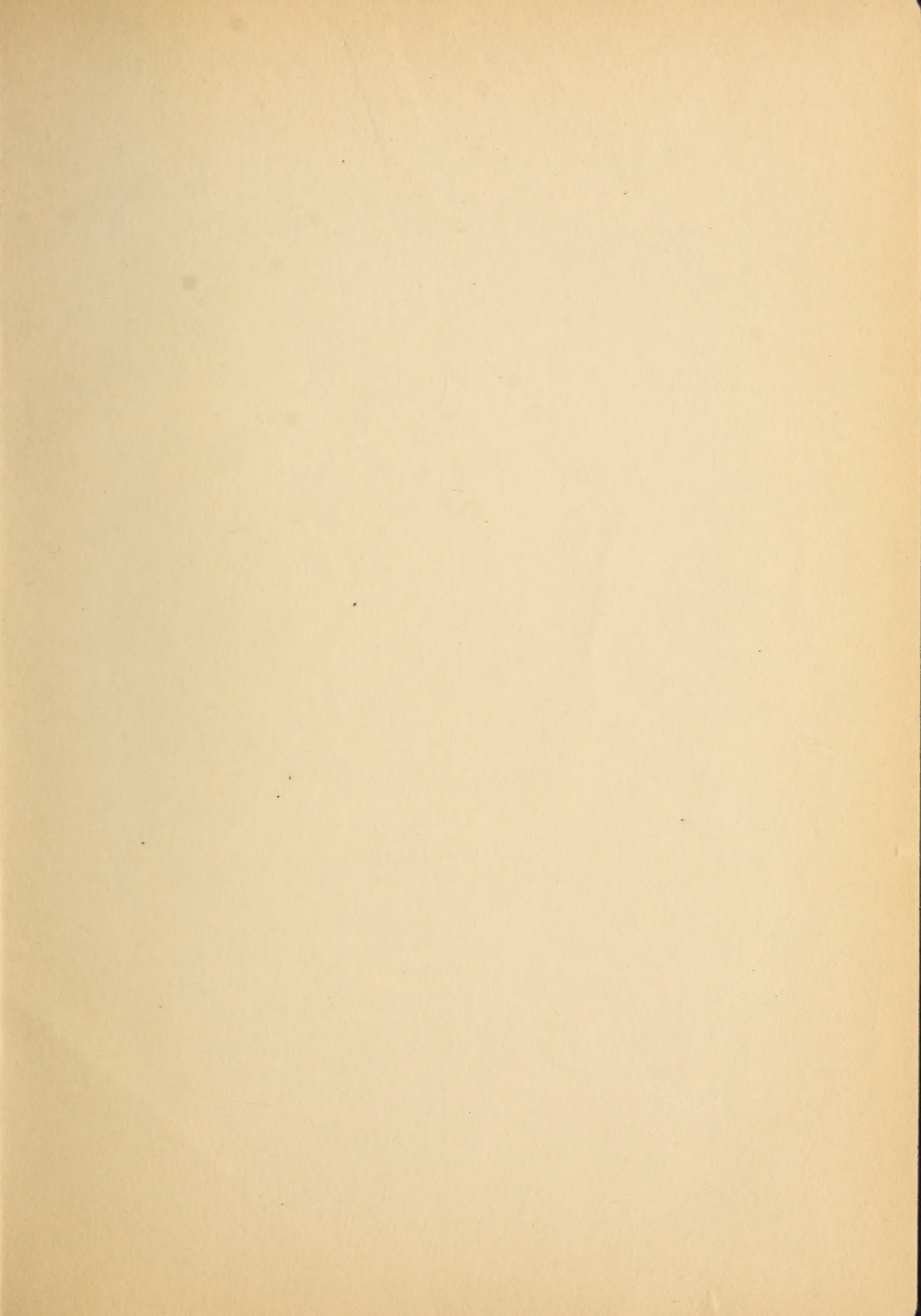
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